A

# *WORD TO THE WISE.*

A

COMEDY,

*BY MR. HUGH KELLY.*

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT

*THE THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.*

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK,

*By Permission of the Manager.*

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation; and those printed in Italics are the Additions of the Theatre.

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THIS

COMEDY

IS INSCRIBED TO

*ROBERT LADBROKE, ESQ.*

AS A PUBLIC TESTIMONY

OF THE

VERY HIGH ESTEEM

IN WHICH

THE AUTHOR HOLDS HIS FRIENDSHIP,

AND A SINCERE MARK

OF THE

VERY JUST RESPECT HE ENTERTAINS

FOR

HIS PRIVATE CHARACTER.

# PROLOGUE.

Written by Mr. KELLY. Spoken by Mr. KING.

*WELL, here you are, and comfortably squeez'd——*
*But do you come quite willing to be pleas'd?—*
*Say, do you wish for bravo—fine—encore——*
*Or—hiss—off, off—no more—no more—no more——*
*Though for true taste I know the warmth you feel,*
*A roasted poet is a glorious meal——*
*And oft I've known a miserable wit,*
*Through downright laughter fasten'd on the spit,*
*Basted, with cat-call sauce, for very fun,*
*Not till quite ready——but till quite undone——*

*And yet you serv'd the puppy as you ought——*
*How dare he think to tell you of a fault——*
*What fair one here from prudence* ever *strays,*
*What lover here* e'er *flatters or betrays?*
*What husband here is ever found to roam,*
*What wife is here that does not* doat *on home?*
*In yon gay circle, not a blooming face*
*From Club's rude king could point you out the ace;*
*No sober trader, in that crowded pit,*
*'Till clear broad-day, will o'er his bottle sit;*
*Nor, while our commerce* fatally *decays,*
*Erect his villa, or set up his chaise——*
*Nay, you above, in cake-consuming bow'rs,*
*Who through whole Sundays munge away your hours;*
*You are so mild, so gentle, that ev'n here,*
*Your sweet ton'd voices never wound the ear;*
Ne'er *make the house for tune or prologue ring,*
*Roast beef—roast beef—the prologue, prologue—King——*

*Why then, thus weigh'd in truth's severest scale,*
*Shall each pert scribbler impudently rail,*
*With dull morality disgrace the stage,*
*And talk of vices in so* pure *an age;*
*Your wise forefathers, in politer days,*
*Had ev'n their faults commended in their plays,*
*To cheat a friend, or violate a wife,*
*Was then true humour, comedy, and life——*
*But now the bard becomes your highest boast,*
*Whose ill-bred pen traduces you the most;*
*Whose saucy muse can hardily aver*
*That still a* lady *possibly can err;*
*That still a* lord *can trick you at a bet,*
*And fools and madmen are existing yet——*

*Be rous'd at last—nor, in an age so nice,*
*Let these grave dunces teize you with advice—*
*What, though some taylor's oft protracted bill*
*May hang all trembling on the author's quill,*
*Regard it not, remove the growing evil—*
*A well-drest poet is the very devil——*
*Do taverns dun him—What, can scribblers treat?*
*Fine times, indeed, when scribblers think to eat——*
*Do justice then—to-night, ten minutes here*
*May blast the bard's whole labour of a year——*
*What do I see!—resentment in your eyes?*
*'Tis true, the fellow at your mercy lies;*
*And of all wreathes, the Briton's noblest crown,*
*Is ne'er to strike an enemy when down.——*

## Dramatis Personae.

### *COVENT-GARDEN.*

| | |
|---|---|
| | *Men.* |
| Sir GEORGE HASTINGS, | Mr. Lee Lewis. |
| Sir JOHN DORMER, | Mr. Hull. |
| WILLOUGHBY, | Mr. Aickin. |
| Captain DORMER, | Mr. Whitfield. |
| VILLARS, | Mr. Lewis. |
| Footman, | Mr. Ledger. |
| | *Women.* |
| Mrs. WILLOUGHBY, | Mrs. Jackson. |
| Miss WILLOUGHBY, | Mrs. Hartley. |
| Miss DORMER, | Mrs. Whitfield. |
| Miss MONTAGUE, | Mrs. Bulkley. |
| JENNY, | Miss Stuart. |
| LUCY, | Mrs. Poussin. |

A

# WORD TO THE WISE.

## *ACT I. SCENE I.*

*An Apartment in Sir* John Dormer*'s House. Enter* Sir JOHN DORMER, Miss DORMER, *and* Miss MONTAGU.

*Sir John.*

WELL but, my dear Caroline, though I grant you that Sir George Hastings has his peculiarities, still you must grant me that he has many very amiable qualities.

Miss *Dor.* I never denied Sir George's merit, sir, but all his good qualities cannot conceal his unaccountable coxcombry; his attention is constantly centered in himself, and there is no enduring a man who fancies that every woman must, at first sight, fall violently in love with him.

Sir *John.* Do you hear her, Miss Montagu?

Miss *Mon.* Why, Sir John, there is no accounting for inclination, you know; however, I cannot look upon Sir George in the very ridiculous light he appears to Miss Dormer.

Miss *Dor.* No—why he is a Narcissus that continually makes love to his own shadow, and I can't bear the idea of a husband, in whose affection I am likely to be every moment rival'd by the looking-glass.

Miss *Mon.* Nay now, my dear, you are rather hard upon him.——Sir George may possibly be a little too fond of himself.

Sir *John.* But that does n't prevent him from entertaining very tender sentiments for Caroline Dormer.

Miss *Mon,* He may be unnecessarily attentive to the nicieties of dress.——

Sir *John.* But then he is attentive to every law of justice and generosity.

Miss *Mon.* And if his foibles provoke us to an occasional smile, his worth must always excite our warmest admiration.

Miss *Dor.* Upon my word, Harriot, a very florid winding up of a period, and very proper for an elevated thought in a sentimental comedy; but I tell you I should relish these encomiums on Sir George well enough, if he was not so particularly recommended to my attention. I really can't support the imagination of vowing honour and obedience to the object of my own ridicule, and it would mortify my pride beyond conception, to see my husband the constant jest of his acquaintance.

Sir *John.* My dear Caroline, do n't be too difficult in your choice, nor entertain any romantic idea of finding a husband, all perfection.—The expectation of too much before marriage, frequently imbitters the union after;—and as the best men will have their little blemishes, we may surely number those among the best, in whose characters we can discover nothing more than a few trifling peculiarities.

Miss *Dor.* I see, sir, you make a point of this affair.

Sir *John.* I would not make a point of any thing, my dear, which I thought would be in the least degree repugnant to your happiness:—but, really, when I consider this

proposal in every respect, when I consider the rank, the fortune, and what is above all, the merit of the man, I cannot but wish that you would give him a favourable reception; and this the more especially, as I am convinced, if the match should take place, that your fine sense and sweetness of temper, will easily mould your husband to your wish, and quickly remove every trace of those foibles, which are at present the only reason of your objection.

Miss *Dor.* You are very good, sir.

Sir *John.* This morning, my dear, Sir George purposes to declare himself in form.—If you can receive his addresses, you will make him happy, and oblige me exceedingly; but if you cannot, deal ingenuously, and reject him; the justice which I owe to him, as well as the tenderness which I have for you, makes this advice doubly requisite.

*Enter a* Servant.

*Ser.* Mr. Willoughby, sir.

Sir *John.* I'll wait upon him instantly. [*Exit* Ser.] Think, therefore, seriously, Caroline, before you determine, for I neither wish to cheat my friend into the possession of a reluctant heart, nor to sacrifice my daughter to the object of her aversion. [*Exit.*

Miss *Dor.* Well, Harriot, what shall I do?—You hear he has actually mention'd him to me in the most serious terms, and that this very morning he is to make a formal declaration.

Miss *Mon.* And what then, does n't Sir John desire you to reject him, if he is really disagreeable?—Can you possibly wish for a greater degree of indulgence?

Miss *Dor.* And yet that very indulgence, my dear Miss Montagu, is likely to render me extremely miserable.

Miss *Mon.* Why indeed, Miss Dormer—remember, child, you complimented me first with the cold respectful epithet of miss—the men in general say, that the surest way of making a woman wretched, is to indulge her inclinations ——But pray, my dear, why is this liberty which Sir John allows you, of promoting your own happiness, so very likely to make you miserable?

Miss *Dor.* Ah, Harriot! don't you see that while he is so generously anxious to consult my wishes, I am bound by gratitude, as well as justice, to pay the greatest regard to his expectations.

Miss *Mon.* You are really an excellent girl, my dear. But pray answer me one question seriously.

Miss *Dor.* What is it?

Miss *Mon.* Is this dislike, which you entertain to your father's choice, entirely the result of your aversion to Sir George? or is it, be honest now, the consequence of a secret partiality for somebody else?

Miss *Dor.* A secret partiality for somebody else!—Pray, my dear, for whom is it likely I should entertain a partiality?

Miss *Mon.* Caroline, Caroline, this reserve is ill-suited both to the nature of our friendship and the customary frankness of your temper—yet, notwithstanding the secrecy you have hitherto so unkindly observed, I can easily see that Mr. Villars——What, conscious, Caroline?

Miss *Dor.* O, Harriot, spare me—nor be offended that I have endeavoured to keep a secret from you, which I absolutely shudder to whisper to myself—to deal candidly, my dear, I must acknowledge that your charge is but too just, and notwithstanding every effort of my pride, and every argument of my prudence, I find this humble yet deserving Villars possesses a much higher place in my esteem than can be consistent with my happiness.

Miss *Mon.* Why, to do the young fellow justice, he is really very agreeable, and has something in his manner that would do credit to a more eligible situation——but——

Miss *Dor.* Ay, Harriot, there's the misfortune—agreeable as he is in every respect, he is still a total dependent on my father, and thinks himself extremely happy that his talents have obtained him even a temporary establishment in an opulent family.

Miss *Mon.* Well, my dear, Sir John is generous, and Mr. Villars is very useful to him in his literary researches; besides, I am not a little pleased at the distinction with which he, as well as the Captain, constantly treats Mr. Villars.

Miss *Dor.* I don't know how it is—Mr. Villars has a manner of commanding respect from every body: he is humble without servility, and spirited———

Miss *Mon.* Oh! he is every thing that's amiable, no doubt ——and the stars have been exceedingly relentless in not giving him a large fortune—however, if I have any skill in the business of the heart, Villars is to the full as uneasy upon your account as you can possibly be on his—he is always contriving excuses for conversing with you, yet when he does, he is in visible confusion; and it was only yesterday evening, when I beg'd he would put a letter for me into the Post-Office, that he stammer'd out, in the utmost perplexity, 'I shall take particular care, madam, to deliver it to Miss Dormer.'

Miss *Dor.* If this be the case, Harriot, I must indeed behave with particular circumspection to him; and yet, though I see the impossibility of ever being his, he has given me an insuperable aversion to the rest of his sex.

Miss *Mon.* What then do you intend to do with Sir George?

Miss *Dor.* To reject him; but still to do it without giving any offence to my father.

Miss *Mon.* And how do you propose to manage it?

Miss *Dor.* By throwing myself honestly upon Sir George's humanity, by telling him my affection is engaged, and by begging of him to withdraw his addresses in such a manner as shall appear to be the result of his own choice, and not the consequence of my disinclination——Sir George, notwithstanding his egregious vanity, is uncommonly good-natured—but let us retire to my room, my dear, I am unfit for company at present, and here we are likely to be broken in upon——O, Harriot.

Miss *Mon.* And O, Caroline, what a very foolish figure does a woman make, when she is lamentably in love.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter* Sir GEORGE HASTINGS, *and* Captain DORMER.

*Dor.* Well, my brother-in-law elect, you are very splendidly dress'd this morning.

Sir *George.* Why, Jack, I think, I do make a pretty tolerable appearance.

*Dor.* And do you think this appearance calculated to make an impression upon a woman of spirit?——Zounds, man, give up your pretensions, for nothing but a fellow of life is likely to succeed with my sister, I can promise you.

Sir *George.* A fellow of life, Jack; that is, I suppose, a fellow of profligacy:—truly, you pay your sister a very pretty compliment.

*Dor.* And why, pray, do you necessarily connect the idea of life with the idea of profligacy?

Sir *George.* Because, in the vocabulary of libertines, like you, Jack, the word life always means a round of every thing that is foolish or unwarrantable.

*Dor.* Why, what the devil are you turned fanatic, George, that you begin to deal so much in second-hand morality?

Sir *Geo.* In short, you fellows of spirit never allow a man a scruple of common sense, till he has entirely prostituted his understanding; nor suppose him to be fit for a commerce with the world, till he absolutely merits to be hunted out of society.

*Dor.* Well but, George, there is one excess of which you yourself have been guilty; and I have known the time, when you took a bottle so freely, that you were generally made toast-master of the company.

Sir *Geo.* Yes, but I soon found out that drinking was detestable, and toasting the greatest of all absurdities.

*Dor.* Why how would you wish to pass an evening?—— Can any thing exceed the pleasure of society, with a few select friends of good-nature and vivacity?

Sir *Geo.* O, nothing to be sure is so delightful as guzzleing down half a dozen bottles, and enjoying the rational discourse—of where does the toast stand—with you, Sir William—no, with you, Sir George—fill him a bumper, Captain Dormer—fill him to the top. O, an evening spent in this manner must be delectable, especially if a couple of fools should happily quarrel in their cups, and cut one another's throats to prove the superiority of their understanding.

*Dor.* Ha! ha! ha!—But was this all your objection to the bottle?

Sir *Geo.* No, for it made my head ach, and disordered my dress beyond bearing.

*Dor.* Disorder'd your dress, ha! ha! ha! what unaccountable coxcombry.

Sir *Geo.* Why, to be sure, it's a very ridiculous thing for a man to shew a little regard for decency.

*Dor.* Well, notwithstanding you are a coxcomb systematically, I am sure the character will not be a strong recommendation to my sister.

Sir *Geo.* Your sister, Jack, is a woman of sense, and must see that she has a much stronger chance of being happy with me, than poor Miss Montagu has of being happy with her brother. My heart is unadulterated, and is, therefore worth any woman's acceptance.

*Dor.* O, no doubt it is a very valuable acquisition.

Sir *Geo.* Whereas, you fellows of life hawk about your hearts from commoner to commoner, till they become quite contemptible; and then with the additional merit of broken constitutions, tottering limbs, pale cheeks, and hollow eyes, you politely offer the refuse of the stews to ladies of fortune family, and character.

*Dor.* And so your affection is unadulterated; ha! ha! ha!

Sir *Geo.* Ay, laugh on and welcome;—but who have we here?

*Dor.* Mr. Willoughby, who will keep you in countenance with maxims of musty morality.

Sir *Geo.* What, my good-natur'd optimist, who thinks every thing happens for the best?

*Dor.* Ay, Candide to perfection, who is continually blessing his stars the more they load him with misfortunes; and pray Heaven his business here this morning has not been to talk with Sir John about my intimacy in his family. [*Aside.*

*Enter* WILLOUGHBY.

*Will.* Sir George, your most obedient. Captain, I am your humble servant.

Sir *Geo.* Mr. Willoughby, yours. How do the ladies, sir?——the good Mrs. Willoughby, and your amiable daughter.

*Will.* Why my daughter, Sir George, is very well; and

my wife is as usual, continually embittering every comfort of life, and lamenting the miseries attendant on mortality.

Sir *Geo.* I wonder she does not choose to follow the sensible example you set her, and endeavour rather to lessen, than to aggravate the measure of unavoidable misfortunes. She's a young woman, and misanthropy at her age is rather out of character.

*Will.* Why, yes, Sir George, she's twenty good years younger than I am, and yet she is twenty times more impatient under the smallest disappointment.

Sir *Geo.* But, my good friend, you don't think her youth a very unfortunate circumstance?

*Will.* O, Sir George, my principle is to think every thing for the best.

*Dor.* Well said, Mr. Willoughby.

*Will.* It wasn't her youth, however, that struck me, but the sobriety of her conduct, and her affection for my daughter;—she was besides a distant relation of my first wife's—liv'd with us in the same house: and some how I lik'd her, because having no fortune, it gave her but little expectation of a better husband.

Sir *Geo.* But why don't you teach her, to adopt some part of your own fortitude under disappointment?

*Dor.* Perhaps it is not in her power to exercise so desirable a philosophy.

*Will.* My dear captain, life has misfortunes enough without our being industrious to increase the number of them—when an accident therefore happens, we should consider that, bad as it may be, it might have been still worse; and instead of arrogantly murmuring at the dispensations of Providence, we should thankfully acknowledge the goodness that did not plunge us into a deeper degree of affliction.

Sir *Geo.* Upon my word I think there is much reason in this argument.

*Will.* Ay, and much policy too, Sir George—we should always imagine that every thing happens for the best—about ten years ago I broke my leg by a fall from a horse.

*Dor.* And pray did this prove a fortunate accident?

*Will.* Yes; for your father, who generously pitied my situation, got my place continued to my family; so that if I drop off to-morrow, there's a comfortable provision for them—Indeed, when the accident happened I could n't foresee this consequence, however I made the best of matters, was thankful that I had n't broke both my legs, and drew a kind of negative good fortune from a stroke of real calamity.

Sir *Geo.* Why what the devil is this fellow Dormer laughing at?

*Dor.* Why how the devil can I help laughing, when the very evils of life are made so many indirect instruments of happiness.

*Will.* Oh! let him laugh, Sir George; he can by no means joke me out of my sentiments. Why, when my son was stolen from me in his infancy, I found a consolation in reflecting that I had not lost my daughter too; and though I have never since been able to hear any account of my poor boy, I am satisfied he was taken from me for the best, and I bear my lot with resignation.

*Dor.* How! do you set down the loss of your son in the chapter of fortunate accidents?

Sir *Geo.* Negatively he may, Dormer; for he might have turned out a libertine like yourself, and in that case his being lost is indeed a very fortunate circumstance.

*Dor.* Very smart, truly—but I suppose you bear your lot with resignation too, Sir George, for you have lately got a good two thousand a year by the death of this young fellow's godfather, old Webly the humourist; and it is your interest to pray that he never may be found, as there is a certain clause in the will you know, which——

Sir *Geo.* Which obliges me to invest him with this estate

if ever he is discovered, a mighty hardship really; and you must be a very pretty fellow to suppose it any way difficult for an honest man, to do a common act of justice.

*Will.* All for the best still, captain. Sir George, we are certain, will do good with his fortune; whereas had it been possessed by my boy, how am I sure that it would not be applied to very different purposes:—yet who knows that it might either; who knows but—however [*Stifling his emotion.*] I am positive every thing happened for the best—and so—and so a good morning to you. [*Exit.*

Sir *Geo.* Poor man, how sensibly he feels the loss of his son, notwithstanding his endeavours to be chearful. But what am I throwing away my time upon you for, when I have business of so much importance with your sister?—— Good bye, Jack, and now let us see if profligates only are to meet encouragement from the ladies. [*Exit.*

*Dor.* Ha! ha! ha! was there ever such a compound of sentiment and vanity. Caroline must keep the fellow in a glass-case, or he'll kill himself before the honey-moon is over, with the fatigue of seeing company. [*Going.*

*Enter* Sir JOHN DORMER.

Sir *John.* Jack, Jack, come back a little—I want a word or two with you.

*Dor.* I fear'd as much [*Aside.*] What are your commands, sir?

Sir *John.* Why, Jack, I need not tell you how anxious I am to have you settled in the world, nor is it necessary for me to put you in mind of the engagement I entered into with my late worthy friend, Sir Ralph Montagu.

*Dor.* I know your obliging solicitude for me extremely well, sir, and I feel it with the most grateful sensibility, but sure there is yet time enough before I undertake the important charge of a family.

Sir *John*. Come, come, you have seen enough of the world to become, if you please, a useful member of society; besides, Miss Montagu is now without a father, and should be treated with an additional degree of attention. Nothing, therefore, can be more improper than to keep a young lady of her merit and fortune waiting for the result of your determination, when you ought to think it a very great honour that she can be prevailed upon to receive you as a husband.

*Dor*. Miss Montagu, sir, will, I dare say, be no way offended at the delay, if I can judge from the indifference with which she constantly behaves to me.

Sir *John*. And how can she behave otherwise, when you constantly treat her with indifference? To be plain with you however, Jack, I fear you are too wild, too dissipated, to think seriously? You moreover possess a spirit of gallantry, which gives me many an uneasy moment, and I am not a little troubled at your continual visits to Mr. Willoughby's.

*Dor*. To Mr. Willoughby, sir, to your own particular friend!

Sir *John*. Yes, and the more I esteem him, the more uneasy I must naturally be at your visiting there so frequently. Miss Willoughby has a fine person, and a feeling heart; she thinks, besides, I have obliged her father, and may, in the fullness of her gratitude, imbibe sentiments for the son of his benefactor. Take care, therefore, take care; gallantry, though a fashionable crime, is a very detestable one; and the wretch who pilfers from us in the hour of his necessity, is an innocent character, compared to the plunderer who wantonly robs us of happiness and reputation.

*Dor*. I hope, sir, I shall never do any thing to bring a reflection upon the honour of my family.

Sir *John*. I hope not, Jack, and therefore I could wish

you were not a man of gallantry: to engage the confidence of the innocence on purpose to betray it, is as mean as it is inhuman.

*Enter a* Servant.

*Ser.* Every thing is ready in the library, sir.

Sir *John.* Very well. [*Exit* Servant.] Come, Jack, think a little on what I have said; in my son let me for once find a friend; the honour of my family is now materially trusted in your hands, and though my tenderness for you may feel at any prostitution of that honour, be assured that my justice will never allow me to pardon it. [*Exit.*

*Enter* VILLARS.

*Dor.* Well, Villars, I fancy Willoughby has at last made a complaint to my father, for I am commanded, in the most positive terms, to think of an immediate marriage with Miss Montagu.

*Vil.* And isn't it by much the most sensible course you can follow?—Miss Montagu is a very fine young lady.

*Dor.* True—but you have never seen Miss Willoughby.

*Vil.* Besides the great fortune——

*Dor.* Miss Willoughby.

*Vil.* That courts your acceptance, if I may so express myself.——

*Dor.* Miss Willoughby.

*Vil.* Oh—I see how it is; and are you then determined to marry Miss Willoughby?

*Dor.* Not so fast—not quite so fast, my dear Villars, I beg of you: Miss Willoughby certainly possesses a greater share of my affection than any other woman in the world; and I don't know, if my father could be brought to approve of such a match, that I should find the least disinclination

to marry her: but as matters stand at present there's no likelihood of such a circumstance, and therefore I would n't choose to disoblige Sir John in so material a point, especially as my wishes with regard to Miss Willoughby may possibly be indulged without so considerable a sacrifice.

*Vil.* I don't understand you.

*Dor.* Why, Miss Willoughby knew all along of my engagement with Miss Montagu, and consequently had no reason to suppose that my intentions could be very matrimonial; besides, she let nobody into the secret of my addresses but her ridiculous step-mother, who is a miserable compound of avarice and affectation: Indeed, to do the young lady justice, it was a considerable time before she would hear a syllable of a tender nature from me, on account of my connection with Miss Montagu.

*Vil.* And how did you manage it at last?

*Dor.* Why, in the most customary manner: I talk'd a damn'd deal of nonsense with a very tragical tone and a very melancholy countenance—exclaim'd against the tyranny of fathers who wanted to force the inclinations of their children from despicable motives of interest—and curs'd the poor stars for giving her so much beauty, and making me so sensible of it: then pressing her tenderly by the hand, I usually ran out of the room, as if in violent emotion, affecting to gulp down a torrent of tears, and left her own pity to be my advocate the moment she recovered the use of her recollection.

*Vil.* What, and did this answer your purpose, sir?

*Dor.* Oh, perfectly; the women are inconceivably fond of the pathetic, and listen to you with rapture if you talk about death or distraction——spring but the mine of their pity, you soon blow their hearts into a flame, and reap more service from an hour of compleat substantial misery, than from a whole year of the most passionate adoration.

*Vil.* Well, captain, and may I presume to ask what use you intend to make of Miss Willoughby's partiality for you?

*Dor.* Why faith, Villars, that's a very puzzling question upon the whole; notwithstanding all my levity, you know I have the deepest reverence for my father, and he must not be disobliged upon any account; though, to deal honestly with you, I have no mighty inclination to Miss Montagu.

*Vil.* And what must become of poor Miss Willoughby?

*Dor.* Why, I shou'dn't like to be a rascal there, neither; yet what can one do?—where a woman 's weak enough to encourage the addresses of a man whom she knows to be pre-engaged, she gives him a kind of title to deceive her: besides, Villars, Miss Willoughby has herself shown a genius for duplicity in this affair, which would make a man of any sense a little considerate.

*Vil.* How so, pray?

*Dor.* Don't you recollect she has deceived her father through the whole transaction? and it is a maxim with me that the woman who can forget the sentiments of nature, has half an inclination to forget the sentiments of virtue.

*Vil.* Poor Miss Willoughby!

*Dor.* You are mightily concern'd for a woman you never saw in your life; however, be easy, I am as sentimental for a libertine, you know, as any fellow in the kingdom, and it shall be Miss Willoughby's own fault if matters are carried to extremities.——But, Villars, step with me to my agent's, and we'll talk farther on this subject: few people despise money more than myself—and yet there are few to whom a snug sum would, at this moment, be more acceptable.

*Vil.* You promise me, then, that in this affair of Miss Willoughby's———

*Dor.* Zounds, Villars, I won't brag too much neither; I

am still flesh and blood, and these make a very dangerous composition in the hour of love and opportunity.

*Vil.* My dear captain, this is no jesting matter—the happiness of a deserving young lady is at stake, and a laugh will but poorly repay a violation of your honour, or a breach of your humanity. [*Exeunt.*

## *ACT II. SCENE I.*

Willoughby's *House*. *Enter* Mr. *and* Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Mrs. *Willoughby.*

AND so, my prudent, sage, considerate dear, you have actually advised Sir John Dormer to restrain his son's visits to our house?

*Will.* Yes, that was my business at Sir John's this morning.

Mrs. *Will.* And you imagine this wise measure will turn out for the best, I suppose?

*Will.* I do really———

Mrs. *Will.* What? You think it for the best to let your poor family continue always in obscurity—and look upon it as a great unhappiness whenever they have the least chance of rising in the world?

*Will.* And you think I have done a mighty foolish thing in preserving the peace, as well as the honour of my poor family, from the greatest of all misfortunes?

Mrs. *Will.* From the greatest of all misfortunes! Did any body ever hear the like?——Why, I tell you Captain Dormer is in love—passionately in love with your daughter.

*Will.* So much the worse.

Mrs. *Will.* So much the worse! this is the only thing in which you ever forgot your all for the best principle.——So

much the worse!—so much the better, I tell you; and, in all likelihood he might have married her, if your ridiculous fear of being happy, had not put Sir John upon his guard, to prevent so desirable a circumstance.

*Will.* What, madam, would you have me trepan the only son of my benefactor, into a marriage with my daughter, and at a time too when I know him to be engaged to a lady of Miss Montagu's family and fortune.——O, Mrs. Willoughby, I am ashamed of these arguments; and if there is no way to be rich, without being despicable, let us look upon poverty as the most eligible of all situations.

Mrs. *Will.* Don't tell me of Miss Montagu's family, Mr. Willoughby; your daughter is not her inferior in that respect; besides, a woman of beauty, educated as I have educated Cornelia, even if she has not altogether so much money, has merit enough to deserve the first man in the kingdom. I am sure if I was a single woman again——

*Will.* You have been a single woman, madam, and are now married to a fellow old enough for your father.

Mrs. *Will.* I don't deserve to be reproach'd by you, Mr. Willoughby; you are at least a gainer by my pity.

*Will.* I think so, my dear—I think all for the best.

Mrs. *Will.* What all for the best! my marrying a man as old as my father! Have a little gratitude, Mr. Willoughby.

*Will.* Well, well, my dear, 'tis foolish for a man and wife to quarrel, because they must make it up again.—— However, we were talking of Captain Dormer—and what is our girl's beauty and education to the purpose?

Mrs. *Will.* Very much to the purpose. They shew there would have been no impropriety in suffering Captain Dormer to marry Cornelia, and they shew that you behav'd very absurdly in striving to prevent the advancement of your own daughter.

*Will.* Madam, madam, young women are apt enough to err of themselves, but a father has indeed a great deal to answer for, who exposes his daughter to unnecessary temptations—Captain Dormer has already been too successful in some families of our acquaintance; and if, while we are contriving to trap him into a marriage with Cornelia, he should find it possible to rob her of her honour, we shall be very properly punished for the baseness of our designs.

Mrs. *Will.* And do you think that possible, after the share I have had in her education?——Though I am but her mother-in-law———

*Will.* My good wife, it is by supposing our own children wiser than the children of other people, that so many are constantly ruined. If we are desirous, therefore, of preserving them unsullied, we should always keep them out of danger; but our ridiculous partiality constantly paints them in the most flattering colours of perfection, and we never suppose them capable of committing the smallest mistake, till they are totally undone.

Mrs. *Will.* Well, it is in vain to talk with you; but remember, I say, you will always be the enemy of your own family.

*Will.* I shall always endeavour, madam, to act as becomes a father, but I shall also strive to act as becomes an honest man, and therefore Captain Dormer shall have no more interviews with my daughter.

Mrs. *Will.* No!

*Will.* No.——My avarice shall neither lead me to injure the happiness of my friend's family, nor shall my weakness betray the honour of my own. Every thing will, I dare say, turn out for the best; though if the worst should happen I shall still find a consolation in having taken every justifiable method to prevent it. [*Exit.*

*Enter* Miss WILLOUGHBY.

Miss *Will.* O, madam, I have heard all: What will become of me?

Mrs. *Will.* Ah, my poor, dear child, was there ever so preposterous a fool as your father?

Miss *Will.* Dear madam, say something to comfort me. You have kindly made yourself the confidant of my sentiments for Captain Dormer, and I must be the most miserable creature in the world, if my father is inflexibly determined to drive him from the house.

Mrs *Will.* I can say nothing to you, Cornelia, but what must add to your regret: there is no hope of any favourable turn in the affairs of our family: day after day produces fresh disappointments; and, instead of having any agreeable prospect to cheer us as we go on, the view becomes more and more clouded with misfortunes.——No, there's no enduring life upon these terms; no, there's no possibility of enduring it.

Miss *Will.* O, that I had never seen Captain Dormer, or that he had been less amiable!

Mrs. *Will.* Ah, my dear child! I know but too well how to pity your distress: I have been in love myself; strangely as he now neglects my advice, I was once very desperately in love with your father: He was the first man that ever said a tender thing to me; and Mexico, if he was dead tomorrow, would not purchase a single glance of regard for another, nor the mines of Peru obtain a smile of approbation.

Miss *Will.* Well, madam, it is happy for me that you have yourself been susceptible of the softer impressions, since that susceptibility has induced you to assist me during my acquaintance with Captain Dormer.

Mrs. *Will.* It is happy for you, Cornelia, and it shall be

happy for you. My tenderness is more than the tenderness of a step-mother, and there is nothing I admire so much as constancy in love. My thoughts, therefore, have not been idle on this affair, and I believe you will allow my understanding to be pretty tolerable.

Miss *Will.* The whole world concurs in an opinion of your good sense, madam; but few entertain a higher idea of it than Captain Dormer.

Mrs. *Will.* The captain, my dear, is a man of taste and discernment.

Miss *Will.* And yet I must give him up for ever.

Mrs. *Will.* 'Tis your own fault. Why won't you take my advice, and make him yours securely?—there is but one way——

Miss *Will.* O, madam, you know my abhorrence of an elopement——I have often told you———

Mrs. *Will.* Yes, and I have often told you that your father's forgiveness may be easily obtained; but that Dormer once married to that Harriot Montagu is lost for ever. Do you imagine, child, I would advise you to an impropriety?

Miss *Will.* But how can I betray the dignity of my sex in proposing so bold a measure to the captain?

Mrs. *Will.* To be sure it's very bold in a woman who has given away her heart, to make an honourable offer of her hand to a lover.——However, stay, child; let poor Dormer be forc'd into this marriage with Miss Montagu, let him be torn irrecoverably from you, and let your obstinacy, like your father's, continually counteract the happiness of your family; were you once Mrs. Dormer, very handsome things might be done for Mr. Willoughby.

Miss *Will.* O, madam, don't attack me in so tender a point!

Mrs. *Will.* Come up stairs, child; suspecting your father's

business to Sir John Dormer's this morning, and dreading the consequence, I have packed up all your things ready for an expedition to Scotland: you must determine, therefore, instantly; and, if you determine to have Dormer, you must act instantly too.

Miss *Will.* What will become of me!

Mrs. *Will.* I don't know what will become of you, if you don't take my advice; and I am sure, on the present occasion, I give you advice that would be very agreeable to half the young ladies within the bills of mortality. [*Exeunt.*

## *SCENE II.*

*Changes to a Room at Sir* John Dormer's. Miss DORMER *and* Sir GEORGE *discovered.*

Sir *Geo.* Nay, my dear Miss Dormer, there is no bearing so unjust an insensibility to the power of your own attractions.

Miss *Dor.* Indeed, Sir George, you over-rate my little merits exceedingly; and probably the greatest I can boast, is my consciousness of their being contracted within a very limited circle.

Sir *Geo.* Well, madam, the very modesty which induces you to decline every pretension to the admiration of the world, is but a fresh proof how greatly you deserve it.

Miss *Dor.* You have much politeness, Sir George, but politeness is your peculiar characteristic.

Sir *Geo.* At least, madam, I have much sincerity; and if Sir John's mediation in my favour, together with as fervent an attachment as ever warmed the bosom, can obtain a look of approbation from Miss Dormer, she may rest satisfied that the business of my life will be an unremitting solicitude for the advancement of her happiness.

Miss *Dor.* I am infinitely honoured by this declaration, and I believe there are not many ladies———

Sir *Geo.* Why, madam, if the vanity may be excused, I flatter myself there are not many ladies who would highly disapprove my addresses.—I have more than once resisted some flattering overtures, and from very fine women too; but my heart was reserved for Miss Dormer, and she will make me the happiest man existing, by kindly condescending to accept it.

Miss *Dor.* I am very sensible how just a value should be placed upon such an affection as yours, Sir George—and it gives me no little———

Sir *Geo.* [*Aside.*] So the captain imagined I should not succeed with her.

Miss *Dor.* You will pardon my confusion, Sir George, but the declaration I am going to make———

Sir *Geo.* Will demand my everlasting gratitude, madam.

Miss *Dor.* I shall be very happy to find you really of this opinion.

Sir *Geo.* I must be eternally of this opinion; condescension and benignity, madam, are animating every feature of that beautiful face, and I am satisfied you will be prevail'd upon, not utterly to disregard the heart that so passionately solicits your acceptance.

Miss *Dor.* Indeed, Sir George, I must own you are possessed of extraordinary merit.

Sir *Geo.* This goodness is too much, madam.

Miss *Dor.* Your understanding is enlarg'd.

Sir *Geo.* Dear Miss Dormer!

Miss *Dor.* Your person is unexceptionable.

Sir *Geo.* You distress me, madam, by this excessive generosity.

Miss *Dor.* Your manners are amiable.

Sir *Geo.* I want words to thank you, madam.

Miss *Dor.* And your humanity is unbounded.

Sir *Geo.* What I am, madam, take me: I am yours, and only yours; nor should the united graces, if prostrate at my feet, and soliciting for pity, rival you a moment in my affection.—No, Miss Dormer, your happiness will ever be the ultimate object of my attention, and I shall no longer wish to exist, than while I am studious to promote it.

Miss *Dor.* Sir George, I fear you misunderstand me; and yet it is in your power to make me very happy.

Sir *Geo.* How can I misunderstand you, my dearest creature, if it is in my power to make you happy.

Miss *Dor.* 'T is in your power indeed, Sir George.

Sir *Geo.* Bewitching loveliness! how you transport me.——So the captain thought I should not succeed with her. [*Aside.*

Miss *Dor.* But if you would wish to see me happy——you must withdraw your addresses.

Sir *Geo.* Miss Dormer!

Miss *Dor.* It is impossible for me ever to return your affection.

Sir *Geo.* Miss Dormer!

Miss *Dor.* And I shall be miserable beyond belief by a continuance of your solicitation.

Sir *Geo.* Miss Dormer!

Miss *Dor.* O, Sir George, to the greatness of your humanity let me appeal against the prepossession of your heart. You see before you a distressed young creature, whose affection is already engaged; and who, though she thinks herself highly honoured by your sentiments, is wholly unable to return them.

Sir *George.* I am extremely sorry, madam, to have been

—I say, madam—that—really I am so exceedingly disconcerted, that I don't know what to say.

Miss *Dor.* O, Sir George, you have no occasion for apologies, though I have unhappily too much; but I know the nicety of your honour, and I depend upon it with security. Let me then entreat an additional act of goodness at your hands, which is absolutely necessary, as well for my peace as for my father's:—this is to contrive such a method of withdrawing your addresses, as will not expose me to his displeasure.—Let the discontinuance of them appear, not to be the result of my request, but the consequence of your own determination; he is a zealous advocate for you, and I should incur his severest resentment, if he was to be acquainted with the real impediment to the match. You are distressed, Sir George, and I am sinking with confusion—I shall, therefore, only add, that I trust you with more than life, and that I conjure you to compassionate my situation. By this conduct you will engage my eternal esteem, and merit that happiness with a much more deserving woman, which it is impossible for you ever to enjoy with me. [*Exit.*

Sir *Geo.* What is all this!—a dream!——No, 'tis no dream, and I feel myself awake but too sensibly. What then, am I rejected, despis'd, where I supposed myself certain of success and approbation.—This is too much; neither my pride nor my tenderness can support the indignity, and I shall—what shall I do? Shall I meanly betray the poor girl who has generously thrown herself upon my humanity, and convince the world by such a conduct that she was right in refusing me:—no, damn it—I scorn a littleness of that nature, and I must shew myself worthy of her affection, though her unfortunate pre-engagement would not suffer me to obtain it. But how, in the name of perplexity, shall I manage the matter?—A refusal on my side

necessarily incurs the general resentment of the family, and the censure of the world into the bargain; so that in all probability I shall not only have the honour of risquing my life but my reputation, and this for the happiness of giving the woman I admire to the arms of my rival.——Really the prospect is a very comfortable one. [*Exit.*

*Enter* Miss MONTAGU *and* Miss DORMER.

Miss *Mon.* Upon my word, Caroline, you have acted a very heroic part; but this unaccountable love is able to carry the most timid of the romantic ladies through the greatest difficulties.—Now, had I been in your situation, I could no more have ask'd the man to take my fault upon himself, than I could have made downright love to him.

Miss *Dor.* Ah, Harriot, you little know to what extremities a strong prepossession is capable of driving a woman, even where there is the most evident impossibility of ever obtaining the object of her inclinations.

Miss *Mon.* O, my dear, I see very plainly that it is capable of driving a woman to very great extremities.

Miss *Dor.* Well I am convinc'd that if any thing was to prevent your marriage with my brother, you would, notwithstanding this seeming insensibility, look upon the rest of his sex with the utmost aversion.

Miss *Mon.* I wonder, Caroline, after my repeated declarations of indifference with regard to your brother, that you can imagine I consider him with the smallest partiality—There was indeed a time when I might have been prevailed upon to endure the creature, but his negligence quickly alarmed my pride, and prevented me from squandering a single sentiment of tenderness upon a man, who seem'd so little inclin'd to deserve it.

Miss *Dor.* Well, my dear, I am in hopes that you will

have but little reason to blame his negligence for the future, because I know he intends this very day to solicit your approbation.

Miss *Mon.* O, he does me infinite honour, and I suppose you imagine he is entitled to one of my best curtsies for so extraordinary an instance of his condescension; but, Caroline, I am not altogether so critically situated as to be glad of a husband at any rate, nor have I such a meanness of disposition as to favour any addresses which are made to me with a visible reluctance.

Miss *Dor.* A visible reluctance, my dear?——

Miss *Mon.* Yes, Caroline, a visible reluctance——'T is true indeed there are a good many kind-hearted creatures who can stoop to flatter a fellow's vanity, even while he treats them with contempt; but I am made of different materials, my dear——I love to mortify the presumption of those confident puppies, who ask my hand with as much familiarity as if they ask'd for a pinch of snuff, and seem to say, 'So, child, I want to make you the upper servant of my family.'

Miss *Dor.* You are a whimsical creature, Harriot, but how can you contrive to invalidate the contract between my brother and you, if you are even serious in your determination?

Miss *Mon.* If I can guess right, your brother will himself find a very expeditious method of breaking it. However, if he should not, I am in no great hurry for a tyrant, and my Strephon's impudent brow shall be pretty well loaded with wrinkles, before he finds me in the humour of saying, 'whenever you please, good sir, and I am very much obliged to you.'

Miss *Dor.* Well, well, Jack must solicit for himself, and I am sure, notwithstanding this pretended want of

feeling, you are no way destitute of good-nature and sensibility.

Miss *Mon.* Good-nature and sensibility, Caroline——ay, 't is this good-nature and sensibility that makes the men so intolerably vain, and renders us so frequently contemptible. If a fellow treats us with ever so much insolence, he has only to burst into a passionate rant, and tell a gross lie with a prodigious agitation; in proportion as he whines we become softened; till at last bursting into tears, we bid the sweet creature rise, tell him that our fortune is entirely at his service, and beg that he will immediately assume the power of making us completely miserable.

Miss *Dor.* What a picture!

Miss *Mon.* While he, scarcely able to stifle his laughter, retires to divert his dissolute companions with our weakness, and breaking into a yawn of insolent affectation, cries, 'Poor fool, she's doatingly fond of me.'—However, Caroline, to convince you at once with regard to my sentiments for your brother——

Miss *Dor.* Well!

Miss *Mon.* Let me tell you now you have determin'd against Sir George, that this very coxcomb as you call him, this Narcissus, who can love nothing but himself according to your account——

Miss *Dor.* Astonishment?

Miss *Mon.* Is the only man I shall ever think of seriously —There, wonder, be amaz'd that I don't see with your eyes, and despise my want of taste; I am a mad girl, you know, and possibly I like Sir George for his peculiarities— but still foibles are less culpable than faults, Caroline, and the vanities even of a coxcomb are more easily cured than the vices of a libertine.

*Enter a* Footman.

*Foot.* Mr. Villars, ladies, sends his compliments, and is ready, if you are disengaged, to play over the new air which you commended last night at the Opera.

Miss *Dor.* O, we 'll wait upon him instantly.

[*Exit* Footman.

Miss *Mon.* [*Ludicrously.*] O yes, we 'll wait upon him instantly!

Miss *Dor.* How can you be so provoking, Harriot?

Mis *Mon.* What, provoking to wait upon your Corydon instantly. Come, my sweet shepherdess, let me shew it to the parlour. [*Exeunt.*

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## *SCENE III.*

*Changes to* Willoughby's. *Enter* Mrs. WILLOUGHBY.

Mrs. *Will.* Mr. Willoughby is return'd, I find, and has got the letter Cornelia left for him.—Well, by this time she 's with her husband that is to be, and will, I suppose, be speedily on her journey.—The Captain can't recede now, and let his father be pleased or displeased, he is still heir to his title and fortune.—What a difficulty I had to shew her the necessity, nay the propriety of this measure;——fond as she is of Dormer, it was hardly possible to engage her in it, and she seem'd at one time more determin'd to give him up for ever, than betray the dignity of the female character. Dignity indeed—I think I know what belongs to female dignity, as well as most people;——these very young girls, however, are strange creatures; their nicety is not in the least wounded when they tell a man they love him. But oh, 't is a deviation from dignity to own they

wish him for a husband. Here comes Mr. Willoughby; he must n't know my share in this transaction till he finds himself happy in the good consequences, and owns that there is at least one sensible head in the family.

*Enter* WILLOUGHBY, *speaking to a* Servant *behind.*

*Will.* Let a coach be call'd directly——she must certainly be gone off to this libertine Dormer.

Mrs. *Will.* Well, have your elevated notions done you any service, or has all turned out for the best now?

*Will.* Madam, madam, do n't distract me, do n't distract me—I am sufficiently miserable without these unnecessary reproaches.

Mrs. *Will.* O you are! I am heartily glad of it——

*Will.* Yet something whispers at my heart that all will still turn out for the best——

Mrs. *Will.* Indeed!

*Will.* Yes, the dispensations of Providence are always founded on justice; and none are ever sufferers in the end, but those who have merited the utmost severity from its hands.

Mrs. *Will.* Fine philosophy, truly; and I suppose you would have thought it for the best if you had lost me, as well as your daughter?

*Will.* [*Ironically.*] I would have tried at least, madam, to be as easy as possible under so great a misfortune.

Mrs. *Will.* You would, you barbarous man—but you are miserable enough without such a circumstance, and that's some comfort to me. Your obstinacy has made your only child desperate, and you have thought it better to run the hazard of her ruin, than to establish her happiness on a certain foundation.

*Will.* I tell you, madam, any distress is preferable to the

perpetration of a crime; and there was no way of acting upon your principles, without the blackest ingratitude to the common benefactor of my family.—I feel for the indiscretion of this unhappy girl with the severest poignancy, but I rejoice that my partiality for her led the father into no action that could impeach the probity of the man.

Mrs. *Will.* Mighty fine.

*Will.* This, madam, is a consolation, a great consolation in this hour of affliction; and let me tell you, that in the severest trials, the truly honest feel a satisfaction, which is never experienced in the most flattering moments of a guilty prosperity.

Mrs. *Will.* Well, well, follow your own course, and answer for the consequences.——Had my advice been taken, but who indeed takes sensible advice now-a-days; you never took my advice in your life, and you see what the effect has proved to your unfortunate family.

*Will.* A truce with your wisdom, madam, I beseech you; for if it only teaches you to be worthless, it would be happy for you to be the greatest idiot in the kingdom: but I have no time to waste in words, every possible measure must be taken for the recovery of this infatuated girl——

Mrs. *Will.* And suppose you should not be able to recover this infatuated girl as you call her—what medicine will your philosophy in that case administer for so great a misfortune?

*Will.* The best of all medicines, the consciousness of having never deserv'd it. [*Exit.*

Mrs. *Will.* Why, you ill-bred brute, won't you take me along with you—I must go with him to see that every thing is conducted with propriety. [*Exit.*

## *ACT III. SCENE I.*

*The Park.* VILLARS *alone.*

*Villars.*

INTO how very hopeless a situation has my fortune at last plunged me, and how unluckily has the very accident which I consider'd as the most happy circumstance of my life, turn'd out a source of disappointment and distress—Here, while I was rejoicing on being entertained by Sir John Dormer, was it possible for me to suppose that his amiable daughter would have made so absolute a conquest of my heart. But on the other hand was it possible to see so much sweetness, affability, and merit, without the warmest admiration? Yet to what purpose do I continually indulge myself in thinking of Miss Dormer? My lot in life is as precarious as it is poor, whereas she is entitled to cherish the noblest expectations.——'T is true, indeed, Captain Dormer has favour'd me with his friendship, and I am in hourly hope of an ensigncy by his means. And will an ensigncy—— No——I 'll lock the secret eternally in my bosom, and since I cannot raise myself up to the importance of her prospects, she shall never be reduced to the penury of mine.

*Enter* Captain DORMER.

*Dor.* All alive and merry, my dear Villars, I am now in cash enough; but here, my boy, is the commission I have been soliciting for you. 'T is just sign'd, and you must do me the additional favour of accepting this note to buy regimentals.

*Vil.* You overwhelm me with this generosity——

*Dor.* Nay, no hesitating——you shall give me a draft upon the agent for the money, or do any thing your ridiculous nicety requires, so you only condescend to oblige me.

*Vil.* I am at a loss for words to——

*Dor.* I am very glad of it, as I don't want to be thank'd for an act of common justice; the necessities of the worthy have a constant claim upon the superfluities of the rich, and we in reality only pay a debt, where the world imagines we confer an obligation.

*Vil.* This way of thinking is so noble, that——

*Dor.* Poh, poh, poh man, let's have none of these elaborate acknowledgements, especially at this time, when I have news for you; such news, would you believe it, Miss Willoughby has actually left her father, and is now at my private lodgings in Pall-mall.

*Vil.* You astonish me!

*Dor.* Read this letter, and it will inform you of every thing.

*Vil.* [*Reads.*] 'My dearest Dormer, my unrelenting father has this morning commanded me, never to receive a visit from you more——

*Dor.* There's a touch of the pathetic, Villars.—My unrelenting father has this morning commanded me, never to receive a visit from you more. [*Ludicrously.*

*Vil.* 'But there's no possibility of existing without my Dormer——

*Dor.* But there's no possibility of existing without my Dormer.

*Vil.* 'I have, therefore, sent some clothes, and a few ornaments, to the house in Pall-mall, where I have occasionally met him, and shall follow them immediately myself——

*Dor.* And shall follow them immediately myself—Ay, there she drops the heroic, and sensibly proceeds to business.

*Vil.* 'If my Dormer's passion is as sincere and as honourable as I think it, he will take instant measures for carrying me to Scotland——

*Dor.* No—Scotland is too far to the north, Villars—too far to the north—but mind what follows.

*Vil.* 'And put it out of the power of the most malignant destiny——

*Dor.* There she's in heroics again, Villars.

*Vil.* 'To rob him of his Cornelia Willoughby.'

*Dor.* To rob him of his Cornelia Willoughby. O, you must speak that with all the emphasis of tragedy tenderness, man:—your voice must be broken, your bosom must be thump'd, your eyes must be fix'd. Zounds, it will never do without a deal of the passionate.

*Vil.* How can you turn a woman into ridicule, whose partiality for yourself, is the only cause of her indiscretion?

*Dor.* And how can you suppose that her partiality for me, should render me blind to the impropriety of her conduct? I can see when a woman plays the fool with myself, as soon as when she plays it with other people.

*Vil.* Well, but what do you intend to do, you see her elopement is upon an absolute supposition of your intending to marry her?

*Dor.* I don't know that, nor do I see how I am bound to take more care of a lady's honour, than she chooses to take herself. But even admitting the force of your supposition, what can I do? It is not in my power to marry her, she knows herself it is not in my power, and I should cut a very ridiculous figure in the eye of the world, if after a fine girl threw herself voluntary into my arms, with a perfect

knowledge of my situation, I was to read her a lecture of morality with a prim, puritanical phyz, and to cry, 'you sha'n't stay with me, Miss, you must go home and be dutiful to your papa.'

*Vil.* My dear captain, a fond woman always judges of her lover by herself; and Miss Willoughby imagines, because she is ready to run any risk for your sake, that you will as readily run any hazard for her's——she therefore trusts you———

*Dor.* Zounds, Villars, how preposterously you argue; does n't every woman who trusts entirely to the discretion of a lover, trust a robber with her purse, and an enemy with her reputation? A woman of real principle will never put it into a man's power to be perfidious, and I should not care to trust any of these eloping damsels with my honour, who are such miserable guardians of their own.

*Vil.* You are a very extraordinary man indeed, to think meanly of a woman, for giving you the greatest proof which she can possibly shew of her affection.

*Dor.* I must think meanly of any woman who gives me an improper proof of her affection, though I may be inclined to take an advantage of it.

*Vil.* Indeed!

*Dor.* O, Villars, if the women did but know how we doat upon them for keeping us at a sensible distance, and how we despise them when they are forwardly fond, their very pride would serve them in the room of reason, and they would learn to be prudent even from the greatness of their vanity.

*Vil.* So then you think Miss Willoughby fair game, now she has——

*Dor.* Undoubtedly; formerly, indeed, I had some scruples on her father's account, but now she has gone this

length, there is no resisting the temptation. As I told you before, Villars, she knows I can't marry her, she knows I am already engag'd, and what the devil do you think she wants with me—hey?

*Vil.* Why but——

*Dor.* Why but—why but what? Only consider, man, what a mind a woman must have, who can plunge her whole family in wretchedness for any fellow's sake; honour believe me, Villars, never took root in a bosom which is dead to the feelings of nature; nor are those in the least to be pitied who are willingly destroyed.

*Vil.* Well, well, I say still——

*Dor.* But well, well—I hav'n't time to hear what you would say, for I want you to go to Pall-mall directly to see that Miss Willoughby is properly accommodated. I know the moment she is missed I shall be suspected, so I'll go to my father's and be in the way there, to save appearances as much as possible.

*Vil.* Why ha'n't you been in Pall-mall to receive her?

*Dor.* Yes, but I had only time to take a few trifling liberties, and I am now going to make love very much against my inclination to Miss Montagu—My father read me a damn'd severe lecture this morning, and the best way of preventing any suspicion from fastening on me about Miss Willoughby, is to shew every mark of readiness to comply with his inclinations; but go, my dear boy, about the business, and I'll do as much for you whene'er a pretty woman brings you into difficulties.

*Vil.* O, I am much oblig'd to you.

*Dor.* The people of the house will admit you directly; and remember that a trifling lie or two must choak neither of us, if any body should question us about the little runaway. [*Exeunt severally.*

## *SCENE II.*

*Changes to Sir* John Dormer's. *Enter* Sir GEORGE.

Sir *Geo.* Why how the plague shall I act in this affair, or with what face can I possibly tell Sir John that I am desirous of declining an alliance with his family, after I have so repeatedly solicited his influence with Miss Dormer. I promised to wait till he return'd from the Cocoa-tree—I wish he was come back with all my heart—for my present situation is none of the most agreeable. Upon my word it was a mighty modest request of the young lady, at the very moment she refus'd me, to desire I would take the whole blame upon myself. Your women of sentiment, however, have a very extraordinary manner of doing things—O, but here comes Sir John, what the devil shall I say to him.

*Enter* Sir JOHN DORMER.

Sir *John.* Sir George I give you joy, joy a thousand times. I met Caroline as I was coming up stairs, and by her silence as well as blushing, I read her readiness to comply with my wishes, and find her the excellent girl I always imagin'd her.

Sir *Geo.* She is a very excellent young lady, indeed, and I am very much obliged to her.

Sir *John.* You can't now, conceive the transport of my heart at her cheerful concurrence, but I hope you will one day experience, that a dutiful child is the first of all human felicities.

Sir *Geo.* It must be a very great happiness, indeed, Sir John.

Sir *John.* Well, Sir George, our lawyers shall meet this

very evening, and every thing shall be settled to our mutual satisfaction.

Sir *Geo.* Yes, Sir John, I wish to settle every thing to your satisfaction.

Sir *John.* There will be no great occasion for expensive preparations.

Sir *Geo.* O, none in the world, none in the world.

Sir *John.* I don't see any necessity you have to move out of our present house in Berkeley-square.

Sir *Geo.* Nor I either.

Sir *John.* You have room enough there.

Sir *Geo.* Plenty.

Sir *John.* Why, what's the matter, Sir George, you speak with an air of coolness and embarrassment that surprizes me?

Sir *Geo.* Sir John, I am incapable of a duplicity.

Sir *John.* Well.

Sir *Geo.* And notwithstanding my wishes for Miss Dormer are as ardent as she is deserving—a circumstance has happened, which must for ever deny me the blessing of her hand.

Sir *John.* You astonish me!——but what circumstance—she is ready——

Sir *Geo.* Yes, yes, she is very ready, Sir John.

Sir *John.* Then pray acquaint me with the impediment.

Sir *Geo.* My dear Sir John, a point, a very nice point of honour prevents the possibility of my indulging you in this request: you may, however, safely assure yourself that I am now no less worthy of your good opinion, than when you favoured me with the warmest recommendation to Miss Dormer.

Sir *John.* Mighty well, Sir George, mighty well, and so you come into my house to solicit my influence in your fa-

vour, over the affections of my daughter, obtain her approbation, and then, without producing one cause for a change in your sentiments, affront us both in the grossest manner, by instantly receding from your engagements.

Sir *Geo.* You are warm, Sir John.

Sir *John.* Have I not abundant cause for warmth, when you deny a reason for the affront which on this occasion you have offered to my family. If you know any thing in my daughter's conduct that renders her unworthy of your alliance, pronounce it freely—and I shall myself be the first to approve your rejection of her. But, Sir George, if you capriciously decline a treaty which you yourself took so much pains to commence, without assigning a sufficient cause for your behaviour; be assured I will have ample satisfaction. Nor shall the altar itself protect you from the united vengeance of an injured friend and an insulted father.

Sir *Geo.* Sir John, I easily conceive the purport of this menace: but whatever measures you intend to take, let me tell you, I shall one day have your thanks for the conduct which now excites your indignation; and, let me also tell you, that the very moment in which your hand is raised against my life, will be the moment in which I shall prove myself the truest friend to your family.

Sir *John.* Away, away, you are all profession and falsehood. My daughter told me that you were incapable of loving any thing but yourself.

Sir *Geo.* I thank her very heartily, sir.

Sir *John.* And that the wishes of your heart were entirely centered in the admiration of your own adorable person.

Sir *Geo.* O, I am infinitely obliged to her.

Sir *John.* But insignificant, as she justly represented you——

Sir *Geo.* Insignificant!

Sir *John*. That insignificance shall not be your protection.

Sir *Geo*. My protection!—So, I want to be protected.

Sir *John*. Therefore, unless you would prove yourself as destitute of courage as of honour, meet me at the Cocoa-tree in an hour; we can easily have a private room, and, if you fail, I shall set such a stigma on the coward, as will render him a scorn even to the greatest profligate in the kingdom. [*Exit*.

Sir *Geo*. So—now I am engaged in a pretty piece of business—and must hazard my life for a woman, who has not only rejected my addresses, but mentioned me with contempt; and danger joined to insult is my reward, where, in reality, I ought to meet with thanks and approbation, la la la la lalla, [*Hums a French air*.] Well, be it as it will, Miss Dormer's secret shall be inviolably preserved. A thrust through the guts is, to be sure, disagreeable enough, but if fellows every day hazard it in defence of the basest actions, there can be no mighty heroism in running a little risque, to support the cause of honour and generosity.

[*Exit*.

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## *SCENE III.*

Dormer's *Lodgings in Pall-mall*. *Enter* Miss WILLOUGHBY.

Miss *Will*. Where shall I hide my miserable head, or how shall I avoid the stroke of impending destruction. The man who should have been the guardian, is himself the person that attacks my honour, and the unlimited confidence which I rashly repos'd in his affection, is now made use of to cover me with disgrace. O that my unhappy sex would learn a little prudence, and be well convinced, when they fly from the imaginary oppression of a father, that they are

not seeking protection from the most cruel of all enemies, those who mean to sacrifice their peace, and blast their reputation.

*Enter* LUCY.

*Lucy.* Madam, there is a gentleman from Captain Dormer come to wait upon you.

Miss *Will.* What can he want with me?

*Lucy.* I really can't say, madam. But, if you please I'll send him up, and then you can know his business from himself.

Miss *Will.* [*Walking about disorderly.*] How am I insulted and expos'd! But the woman deserves no respect from others, who does not shew a proper regard for her own character.

*Lucy.* [*Aside.*] Lord! what a mighty fuss we make, though I don't see we are a bit handsomer than other people.——Well, madam, what shall I say to the gentleman?

Miss *Will.* Shew the gentleman up.

*Lucy.* [*Pertly.*] Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

Miss *Will.* Whoever he is he cannot increase my fears, and may possibly bring me some intelligence to mitigate their severity.

*Enter* VILLARS.

*Vil.* Madam, your most obedient.——I wait upon you with Captain Dormer's respects, to apologize for his unavoidable absence a few hours, and to hope that every thing here is quite to your satisfaction.

Miss *Will.* As the captain, sir, has engaged your good offices on this occasion, I suppose you are acquainted with the history of my indiscretion.

*Vil.* The captain, madam, gave me no particular account

of matters, but only sent me as a friend, on whose secrecy he could rely, to apologize for his absence, and to enquire how you approved of this situation.

Miss *Will.* [*With emotion.*] Sir, I don't approve of this situation at all.

*Vil.* I should be sorry, madam, that my presence distressed you.

Miss *Will.* 'T is not your presence, sir, which distresses me, 't is the consciousness of my own folly; 't is the danger to which I have exposed myself.——But, sir, your appearance is the appearance of humanity; and I think you look with compassion on an unhappy young creature, whom the perfidy of a man too tenderly esteem'd, has devoted to destruction; if you do, sir, save me——I conjure you, by all you hold most dear, to save me from dishonour. I have been indiscreet, but not criminal, and the purity of my intention has some claim to pity, though the rashness of my flight may be wholly without excuse.

*Vil.* Be compos'd, madam; pray be compos'd.——You affect me exceedingly; and you shall find a protector in me if you have any just cause to apprehend the least violence from Captain Dormer.

Miss *Will.* If I have any cause, sir!—Why, instead of proceeding with me to a place where we might be securely united, am I detained in this unaccountable house?—Why did he here attempt liberties that must be shocking to the mind of sensibility? And why at his departure did he give the people here orders to confine me to these apartments?

*Vil.* You feel too strongly, madam.

Miss *Will.* Can I feel too strongly, sir, where my everlasting peace of mind is destroyed; and where the man who declared he only existed for my sake, is cruelly industrious to plunge me into infamy?——Unknowing in the ways of

the world, I could not distinguish between the language of sincerity, and the voice of dissimulation. By my own integrity I judged of his truth, and could not think that any man would be monster enough to return a tender partiality for himself with disgrace and destruction.

*Vil.* Madam, there is something in your manner—there is something in this generous indignation that disposes me very warmly to serve you; and if you really desire to leave this house, you shall leave it instantly; the people have directions to obey me in every thing, and I do not think myself obliged to answer Mr. Dormer's expectations, where his demands are evidently contrary to the principles of virtue.

Miss *Will.* Sir, you charm me with these sentiments.

*Vil.* Madam, they are sentiments which should regulate the conduct of every man; for he who suffers a bad action to be committed, when he has the power of preventing it, is, in my opinion, as guilty as the actual perpetrator of the crime.

Miss *Will.* I am eternally indebted to this generosity, sir.

*Vil.* Not in the least, madam. For, abstracted from my general abhorrence of what is indefensible, I find, I know not how, an irresistible inclination to serve you. But we lose time. I'll order a coach directly to the door, and leave you at perfect liberty to follow your own inclinations.

Miss *Will.* I have fix'd a reliance on your honour, sir, and only lament that I have nothing but thanks to show my gratitude for this goodness.

*Vil.* My dear madam, your thanks are more than I deserve. What I have done—humanity made my duty; and the most contemptible of mankind is he who declines the performance of a good action, because he has not an expectation of being rewarded. [*Exeunt.*

## *ACT IV. SCENE I.*

*Sir* John Dormer's. *Enter* Captain DORMER, *followed by* WILLOUGHBY.

*Willoughby.*

CAPTAIN Dormer, don't keep me on the rack, but give me up my daughter.

*Dor.* Sir, I have repeatedly told you———

*Will.* Yes, sir, you have repeatedly told me that you are wholly unconcerned in her flight—But this is the only thing in which I could find it any way difficult to believe you.

*Dor.* Mr. Willoughby, this doubt of my veracity is neither kind nor delicate.

*Will.* Don't insult me, Captain Dormer, while you are loading me with calamity, or possibly I may forget that you are the son of my benefactor. However, sir, I do not come here to menace, but to supplicate. I do not come here to provoke the warmth of your temper, but to interest the sensibility of your heart. You see me a distress'd, unfortunate, miserable old man! The whole happiness of my life is wrapp'd up in the inconsiderate girl you have stolen from my arms—and if she's not instantly return'd, my portion will be distraction. Restore her, therefore, I beseech you, and restore her while she is innocent. The blow is a barbarous one, which is aim'd at the bosom of a friend—and the triumph is despicable indeed which is purchased at the expence of humanity.

*Dor.* [*Aside.*] Why, how contemptible a rascal is a libertine!

*Will.* For pity's sake give me back my child; nor destroy, in your giddy pursuit of pleasure, the eternal peace of a man who would readily risque his life for the advancement of your happiness.——You have generosity, Captain Dormer, and you have understanding—yet you combat the natural benevolence of your heart, and oppose the evident sense of your own conviction: You are cruel, because it is gallant; and you are licentious, because it is fashionable. But, sir, let my distress, my anguish, restore you to yourself, and teach you, in some measure, to anticipate the feelings of a father. Early in life an only son was taken from me, and the evening of my days is now to be marked with the pollution of an only daughter! O! Mr. Dormer, you men of pleasure know not how wide a ruin you spread in the progress of your unwarrantable inclinations. You do not recollect, that, besides the unhappy victim sacrific'd, there is a family to participate in her injuries; a mother, perhaps, to die at her destruction, and a wretch, like me, to madden at her disgrace!

*Dor.* I cannot be the rascal I intended. [*Aside.*]——Sir—Mr. Willoughby, be satisfied. Miss Willoughby is safe and well——nor shall I ever entertain a wish to disturb your happiness, or to injure her reputation.

*Will.* Eternal blessings on you for this generous declaration. But, if you speak your real sentiments, conduct me instantly to my child.

*Dor.* With pleasure, sir——and I have great reason to imagine, that the anxiety she has suffered in consequence of this little indiscretion, will make her additionally worthy of your affection.

*Will.* Why, I always said that every thing happens for the best; and that many accidents are really blessings in disguise, which we lament as absolute misfortunes.

*Dor.* Your philosophy will be justified in the present case, I assure you.

*Will.* Give me your hand, captain. I esteem you more than ever. But come; I am impatient to see my poor girl. Her fault was the result of her inexperience; and, if we were all to be punished for the errors of indiscretion, what would become of the best of us?

*Dor.* Justly considered, sir.

*Will.* Come along, come along, man: I want to be gone; and my miserable wife, whom I did n't care to bring in, for fear she should be clamourous, waits for me in a coach at the end of the street.

*Dor.* I attend you, sir; yet if half the gay fellows about town were informed of the business I am going upon—I fancy they 'd laugh at me pretty heartily.

*Will.* Ah! captain! a man of sense should despise the ridicule of the profligate, and recollect—that the laughter of a thousand fools is by no means so cutting as the severity of his own detestation. [*Exeunt.*

## *SCENE II.*

*Changes to another Apartment in Sir* John Dormer's. *Enter* Miss MONTAGU *and* Miss WILLOUGHBY.

Miss *Will.* Thus, my dear madam, have I given you the whole history of my infatuation; and I have now only to repeat my sincere concern for thinking it possible that Captain Dormer could be insensible of your very great merit, and to intreat the favour of your interposition with my father.

Miss *Mon.* My dear girl, there is no occasion whatsoever for this generous apology.

Miss *Will.* Indeed, madam, there is—I was unpardonably

vain in attempting to dispute a heart with you, and I was extremely culpable in forgetting how much the completion of my own wishes might disturb the peace of a family, to which my father had so many obligations.

Miss *Mon.* My dear Miss Willoughby, we women are all fools when we are in love, and it is but natural that our own happiness should be more immediately the object of our attention, than the happiness of other people. But I want to ask you a question about this recreant of ours, to which I beg you will give me an ingenuous answer.

Miss *Will.* Pray propose your question, madam.

Miss *Mon.* Then, my dear, suppose matters could be so brought about, that Sir John would approve the captain's attachment to you—could you, tell me candidly, forgive the insolent use which he has just made of your generosity?

Miss *Will.* Dear Miss Montagu, why do you ask me such a question?

Miss *Mon.* Because I am pretty sure you may still have him, if you think him worth your acceptance.

Miss *Will.* I really don't understand you.

Miss *Mon.* You shall understand me, then—I never will marry Captain Dormer.

Miss *Will.* Madam!

Miss *Mon.* He 's not a man to my taste.

Miss *Will.* No!

Miss *Mon.* No——he is worse to me, to make use of an affected simile, than prepar'd chicken gloves, or almond paste.

Miss *Will.* Indeed!

Miss *Mon.* Yes——he is more offensive than Naples' dew, or Venetian cream, the essence of Daffodil, or the Imperial milk of roses.

Miss *Will.* You can't be serious, surely!—not like him!

Miss *Mon.* No, positively I do n't like him.

Miss *Will.* Why, where can there be so———

Miss *Mon.* O, bravo!

*Is he not more than painting can express,*
*Or youthful poets fancy when they love.*

Miss *Will.* You reprove me very justly, madam; and I blush to speak of a man with softness, whom I should always consider with indignation.

Miss *Mon.* Come, come, my dear, the captain is a very agreeable young fellow after all. But I know he is as indifferent about me as I can possibly be about him, and I should never have a syllable of the tender kind from him, if he was not extremely unwilling to disoblige his father.

Miss *Will.* Has he yet declar'd himself, madam?

Miss *Mon.* Why, not expressly; but I expect him every moment to open with the usual formality, and, if you please, we cannot only render the scene a whimsical one, but make him smart very sensibly for the liberties of this morning.

Miss *Will.* In what manner, pray?

Miss *Mon.* Why, the moment he comes, you shall retire into this closet; and, in the midst of all his professions to me, I shall take an opportunity of mentioning your name with an air of jealous resentment.

Miss *Will.* Well!

Miss *Mon.* This, I am sure will induce him to make violent protestations, that this heavenly face of mine alone is the object of his adoration; and, as the men think it no way dishonourable to tell a trifling little fib to a woman, I shall soon have him vowing everlasting fidelity, and swearing,

*The envious moon grows pale and sick with grief,*
*That I, her maid, am far more fair than she.*

Miss *Will.* I conceive the whole design, madam.

Miss *Mon.* Well then, when he is in the meridian of all his nonsense—do you steal softly out of the closet and sit in that chair—I 'll take care that he doesn't see you. If he forswears his passion for you, give him a gentle pull by the sleeve—and, looking him steadfastly in the face, leave all the rest to accident.

Miss *Will.* I am afraid I sha'n't have spirits to go through with it.

Miss *Mon.* Courage, child; ha'n't I given you spirits enough, in declaring that I 'll never marry him?—I think you said my woman let you in, and that you saw nobody else.

Miss *Will.* Yes.

Miss *Mon.* Why then she shall keep your being here a secret from every body, and I warrant we'll pay the captain off pretty handsomely——But why so melancholy?

Miss *Will.* Why, my dear Miss Montagu, I do n't know, if in justice to you, I should think any more of Dormer—he has so many accomplishments———

Miss *Mon.* Well, my dear, to make you entirely easy, there is a man in the world who is, in my opinion, much more accomplished; but not a word to any body on this matter for your life—I only mention it to you in confidence, and to show the probability of your yet being happy with Dormer.

*Enter* JENNY.

*Jenny.* Madam, the pens and paper are laid in the next room.

Miss *Mon.* Very well—go—and, Jenny———

*Jenny.* Madam.

Miss *Mon.* Don't give the least hint to any of the family that Miss Willoughby is here.

*Jenny.* By no means, madam. [*Exit.*

Miss *Mon.* And now we'll prepare a letter to your father. But come, my dear girl, you must not be so dejected—Your little error is amply atoned for by the generosity of this conduct; and there are some faults, which, like happy shades in a fine picture, actually give a forcible effect to the amiable light of our characters. [*Exeunt.*

## *SCENE III.*

*Changes to the Pall-Mall Apartments. Enter* WILLOUGHBY, Mrs. WILLOUGHBY, DORMER, *and* LUCY.

*Dor.* Come in, my dear sir; come in; don't be alarm'd, Miss Willoughby—your father is prepared to overlook every ———Why, she is n't here!

*Lucy.* Pray, sir, did n't I tell you so?

Mrs. *Will.* What, is n't she here?

*Lucy.* No, madam.

*Will.* No!

*Lucy.* Lord bless you, sir, did n't I tell you so as you came up?

*Dor.* And where is she gone too?

*Lucy.* Do you desire I should tell the truth?

*Will.* Ay, speak the truth, child, and fear nothing.—— But let's take a peep into this room? [*Goes into another room.*

*Lucy.* Then the truth is———

Mrs. *Will.* That's a good girl, speak up.

*Lucy.* The truth is, I do n't know where she's gone.

*Dor.* Death and confusion, where can she be gone to?

*Lucy.* That I do n't know, as I said before—but she went with your friend—the gentleman you sent here on a message to her. [*Exit.*

Mrs. *Will.* O, she's gone away with a friend of your's, is she—for shame, Captain Dormer—you a tender lover—you animated with that exquisite softness which souls of sensibility feel.

*Dor.* Death, madam, why will you teaze me in this manner—I tell you I have been betray'd——

*Re-enter* WILLOUGHBY.

*Will.* No, sir, it is I who am betrayed. And so a friend of his has carried her off. [*To Mrs.* Willoughby.

Mrs. *Will.* Yes, and every thing happens for the best now—does not it?

*Dor.* Mr. Willoughby, hear me.

*Will.* Captain Dormer, after this reiterated insult, this aggravated cruelty—'tis infamous to talk with you.—However, sir, old as you think me, and little as you dread my resentment, you shall feel it heavily.——No! injured as I am, you shall never receive a stroke from me.—I am too miserable myself by the loss of a child, to stab my best benefactor even in the person of a worthless son.—You are, therefore, safe—Safe as the fears of cowardice can wish. But, if you have feelings, to those feelings I consign you—They will wake a scorpion in that bosom to avenge my wrongs.—For know, though bad men may find it possible to elude the justice of a whole universe, they are yet utterly without means of flying from their own recollection.

*Dor.* Mr. Willoughby, let me only explain the matter—

*Will.* Sir, I'll talk to no monsters.

*Dor.* Dear, Mrs. Willoughby, your husband is so impetuous——

Mrs. *Will.* Don't speak to me, sir,—don't speak to me.—A perfidious lover shall never gain an audience from Mr. Willoughby.—But, my dear, what do you intend doing!

*Will.* Pray, madam, do n't teaze me.

Mrs. *Will.* Why, you ill-natured——but I won't forget the bounds of propriety, especially as you are not mad man enough to fight—It would be little for the better if you were killed.

*Will.* Death, madam, any thing would be for the better, that set me free from your intolerable impertinence. [*Exit.*

Mrs. *Will.* Did the world ever hear such a vulgar fellow! —But these husbands have no more breeding!—And here he is gone without giving me his hand. In a little time I suppose the fair sex will be neglected. [*Going, returns.*] But, sir, a word in your ear. You are a base man.—I would not violate propriety for the world—but you are a base man. Sir John shall know every thing instantly.—'T was I that urg'd my poor girl to repose that implicit confidence in your honour—and since my advice has lost—my assiduity will do any thing to recover her. [*Exit.*

*Dor.* Why, how just is it that profligacy should be constantly attended with punishment, and how reasonable is it, that those who make no scruple of wounding the happiness of others, should be conspicuously miserable themselves.—How shall I look my father in the face, when this matter comes to be known; or how shall I see this unhappy old man, whom I have so infamously wronged. What a poor, what a paltry, what a merciless passion is this passion of gallantry; yet it reflects no scandal whatever upon its followers, though it begins in the most despicable falsehood, and terminates in the most irreparable destruction. A man of gallantry is the only wretch who can despise the sense of shame, and stifle the feelings of gratitude without reproach; take him into your house, he attempts the sanctity of your bed;—load him with obligations, and he betrays the purity of your daughter. The sensible world, however, allows

him to be a man of honour all the time, and he stabs you with impunity to the heart for presuming to complain of your wrongs. Why did not I see the blackness of this character a little earlier. But—no—my cursed pride would resist the arguments of my conviction. And for a pitiful triumph over an unsuspecting innocent, I must basely divest myself both of reason and humanity. Where can this girl be fled to?—Villars I am sure is incapable of betraying me, and as she came here with her own consent, she was prepared for the consequences of course.

*Enter* VILLARS.

My dear Villars, you are come most luckily here, Miss Willoughby is gone off, and the people of the house have the impudence to say, by your means.

*Vil.* Well, and they say very justly.

*Dor.* How 's this?

*Vil.* I suffer'd her to escape—I assisted in her escape—and am now ready to answer for the consequences.

*Dor.* Indeed!

*Vil.* But first, sir, let me return you the commission, and the note with which you were this morning so kind as to present me. I do not mean to keep your favours while I counteract your views, and I scorn to profit by the generosity of any man, unless upon terms that merit my approbation.

*Dor.* Death and the devil, sir, how dare you use me in this manner: how dare you betray my confidence so scandalously, draw, and give me instant satisfaction.

*Vil.* I came here on purpose to give you satisfaction—but before I draw suffer me to ask a question or two in my turn. And now, sir, how dare you suppose that I was to be made the instrument of your licentiousness; how dare you suppose that I would be the pandor to your vices, and join

with you in a barbarous contrivance of destroying a young creature, whose inexperience was her only crime?

*Dor.* Here's a fellow!

*Vil.* But I suppose you insulted me on account of my situation, and imagined because I was poor that I was consequently worthless; however, sir, be now undeceived, and, in the midst of your affluence, and my poverty, know that I am your superior, for the best of all reasons, because I disdain to commit a despicable action.

*Dor.* I am astonished at the very impudence of his rectitude, and can't say a syllable to him.

*Vil.* When I came here, instead of a willing victim to your wishes, I found Miss Willoughby in the utmost affliction, conscious of her indiscretion in flying from her father, and shuddering with apprehension of violence from you. She soon inform'd me of her fears, and lamented, in the most pathetic terms, how greatly she had been deceiv'd in the object of her affection.—She imagin'd an honourable union with you, would have been the consequence of her flight; and little supposed that the man she lov'd would make use of her partiality for himself to cover her with disgrace.—Thus disappointed, thus betray'd, she ask'd for my protection, she receiv'd it; and now, sir, [*Drawing.*] take your revenge.

*Dor.* Yes, sir, I will take my revenge, but it shall be thus——[*Throwing down his sword, and shaking* Villars *by the hand.*] Thus, my dear Villars, let me thank you for the superiority of your principles; I am myself just awakened to a sense of true honour, and cannot, now I know the real motive of your conduct, resent, as an injury, what I must look upon with the highest admiration.

*Vil.* How agreeably you surprize me, sir.

*Dor.* Dear Villars, take these trifles again, or I shall not

think you forgive me. [Villars *accepts the commission, &c.*] But, my poor girl—and so she has principle after all—what a rascal have I been! Do tell me where she's gone.

*Vil.* Indeed I cannot—I only saw her into a coach; but I suppose she is returned to her father's.

*Dor.* No, she is not—her father is but just gone—he came to me, as I suspected, on the very first knowledge of her flight; and shew'd so deep a distress, that I could n't persevere in my design of seeming wholly ignorant of her elopement.

*Vil.* Well!

*Dor.* I therefore brought him here to give her back; and the poor man was actually in extacies; but when he found she was gone, he lost all patience; and, naturally enough, imagining that she was carried off by my contrivance, treated me with a freedom, which nothing but the conviction of my guilt could enable me to endure, even from the father of Miss Willoughby.

*Vil.* Upon my word, this affair has drawn you into a very disagreeable situation.

*Dor.* Into a disagreeable situation! into a damn'd one, and I shall hate the word gallantry as long as I live.—My friend's daughter too!—shame—shame—shame—zounds! Villars, a man ought to be good even from policy, if he is not so from inclination.—Damn it, you do n't know half the perplexities of my situation.

*Vil.* No!

*Dor.* No. Distracted as I am, I must assume a calm unruffled face immediately, before Miss Montagu.

*Vil.* What, are you going to Miss Montagu directly?

*Dor.* Yes, instantly—I have myself requested a tete a tete, to make a formal declaration, and truly I am in a pretty frame of mind to make love to a woman of her vivacity.

*Vil.* Why, indeed, your hands are pretty full of business.

*Dor.* Yes, yes, I have business enough: and my father will know every thing presently. But I must be a man of gallantry, and be damn'd to me!—Villars, you now see, that the greatest of all idiots is he who makes himself despicable to destroy his own happiness. [*Exeunt.*

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## *SCENE IV.*

*Changes to a Room at the Cocoa-tree.* Sir GEORGE *alone.*

Sir *Geo.* Well, here I am; and a pleasant affair I have to go through!—I wish it was well over:—For, though there may be a great deal of bravery in venturing one's life, I can't say that there is a great deal of satisfaction.

*Enter a* Waiter.

*Wait.* Sir John Dormer, sir.

Sir *Geo.* Shew Sir John up. Now for it.

*The* Waiter *returns, introducing* Sir JOHN, *and exit.*

Sir *Geo.* Sir John, your most obedient.

Sir *John.* Well, Sir George, I see you are a man of courage, at least; and so far I find you worth my resentment.

Sir *Geo.* No reproaches now, my dear Sir John: for the greatest enemies make a point of being perfectly well bred, when they are going to cut one another's throats.

Sir *John.* Then, Sir George, that I may answer your ideas of politeness, let me beg of you to draw instantly.

Sir *Geo.* There is no refusing a request which is made with so much civility; and now, sir, I am all obedience to your commands.

Sir *John.* And now to punish the infamous insult which has been offered to my family.

Miss DORMER *rushes from a door at the head of the stage, and, falling upon her knees, exclaims,*

Then punish it here, for I alone am culpable.

Sir *John.* How's this!

Miss *Dor.* O, sir, hear me with pity; for the dread of your resentment is insupportable.

Sir *Geo.* A lady upon her knees! Pray, madam, suffer me to raise you up.

Miss *Dor.* No, Sir George: this attitude best becomes a creature like me, who has not only exposed her benefactor to danger, but even rais'd a sword against the life of her father.

Sir *John.* Rise, Caroline. But tell me, in the name of wonder, what I am to understand by this?

Miss *Dor.* My indiscretion, sir—my disobedience. For, though you have ever treated me with the most unbounded indulgence, I have nevertheless ungratefully diappointed your views, and placed my affections upon an object that can never be entitled to your approbation.

Sir *Geo.* So my throat seems to be pretty safe this time.

Sir *John.* Go on.

Miss *Dor.* Actuated by my regard for this object, though utterly despairing to obtain him, I trusted Sir George with the secret, in the fulness of my heart, and begg'd he would not only withdraw his addresses, but withdraw them in such a manner, as might save me even from the suspicion of any unwillingness to pay an implicit obedience to your commands.

Sir *John.* This is very extraordinary.

Sir *Geo,* Yes, but it's very true for all that.

Miss *Dor.* Sir George saw my distress, and kindly complied with my request; and had n't I accidentally overheard the altercation which produc'd this meeting, the best of fathers, or the noblest of men, [*Pointing to Sir* George.] had perhaps fallen a sacrifice to the unhappy prepossession of an inconsiderate daughter.

Sir *Geo.* I never knew so sensible a woman in my life.

Miss *Dor.* Distracted at the extremity to which matters were carried, I knew not how to act—the moment I was capable of resolving, I resolv'd to fly here and wait for your arrival, not coming to any determination till you, sir, and Sir George had quitted the house; here I hinted to the people my apprehension of a misunderstanding between you, and desir'd to be plac'd in the next room to that which he told me was reserv'd for your use; the rest is already known, and I am now to entreat Sir George's forgiveness, for the danger to which his unexampled greatness of mind had so nearly expos'd him, and to implore your pardon, sir, for daring to entertain even a hopeless prepossession, when I knew it must combat with the favourite object of your inclinations.

Sir *Geo.* Come, Sir John, what the devil are you dreaming of; you and I are friends now, and therefore we need not stand altogether upon ceremonies.

Sir *John.* I am considering, Sir George, whether I ought most to be pleas'd, or offended with my daughter.

Sir *Geo.* Zounds, man, be pleas'd with her, for it will be most to your own satisfaction.

Sir *John.* Then, Caroline, let me tell you that I am charm'd with your frankness upon this occasion—though I am sorry it was not shewn a little earlier—had you ingenuously told me the situation of your heart when I talk'd to you this morning, you would have sav'd yourself much

anxiety, and prevented me from behaving in a manner to Sir George that I must be eternally asham'd of.

Miss *Dor.* Indeed, sir, if you knew my motive——

Sir *Geo.* Come, come, my dear Miss Dormer, don't let us pain ourselves with the recollection of past anxieties, when we may indulge ourselves with the prospect of future happiness—I have no notion of the wisdom that makes us miserable, and, therefore, Sir John must, and shall, if he expects me to overlook his cavalier conduct of to-day, do me the favour to consult your inclinations.

Miss *Dor.* You are too good, Sir George—but——

Sir *John.* Speak up, my dear, and tell us candidly who you have distinguished with your approbation—I am not one of the fathers who wish to maintain a despotic authority, nor will I make my daughter wretched, to convince the world that I am master in my family.

Sir *Geo.* O fye, Sir John, there are a great many good fathers who never refuse any thing but happiness to their children.

Miss *Dor.* I am so overwhelmed with this goodness, it is at present too much for me. As we go home in the coach, I shall endeavour to let you know every thing, especially as the object of my choice is——

Sir *John.* Is he a man of merit, my dear—is he a good man—he that is worthy in himself, is above the despicable necessity of stealing a reputation from the virtue of his progenitors; the riches of the heart are the noblest of all possessions. [*Exeunt Sir* John *and Miss* Dormer.

Sir *Geo.* I am entirely of Sir John's opinion——the riches of the heart are the noblest of all possessions, and I don't think that, on the present occasion, I have proved myself the poorest fellow in the kingdom, notwithstanding my recent insignificance. [*Exit.*

## *ACT V. SCENE I.*

*Sir* John Dormer's *House. Enter* Miss MONTAGU, *and* Miss WILLOUGHBY.

*Miss Montagu.*

WHY, what can keep this hopeful Corydon of our's.

Miss *Will.* Possibly some other attachment.

Miss *Mon.* Jealousy, Miss Willoughby, rank jealousy, my dear girl. O that we should be such fools as to bestow a single thought upon these wretched fellows, who are not sensible of the obligation.

*Enter* JENNY.

*Jenny.* Madam, madam, Captain Dormer is coming up. [*Exit.*

Miss *Mon.* To your ambush, my dear, and be sure you watch a proper opportunity of annoying the enemy.

Miss *Will.* [*Retiring into a closet.*] O, you sha'n't have any occasion to question my generalship.

*Enter* DORMER.

*Dor.* Miss Montagu, your most obedient.

Miss *Mon.* Captain Dormer, your most devoted humble servant.

*Dor.* I am come my dear Miss Montagu——

Miss *Mon.* I see you are, my dear Captain Dormer.

*Dor.* The amiable vivacity of your temper, madam, has always been an object of my admiration—but I come now to solicit you in regard to a subject———

Miss *Mon.* Upon which it is criminal, I suppose, to exercise my amiable vivacity.

*Dor.* I need not inform you, madam, of the engagement which, so happily for me, subsists between our families; nor need I remind you——

Miss *Mon.* Why then do you give yourself this trouble, sir, if the information is so very unnecessary?

*Dor.* That I may tell you, madam, I am inexpressibly fortunate in the honour of this interview, and that I may assure the most charming of her sex, the whole felicity of my life materially depends upon her approbation.

Miss *Mon.* Upon my word, a very pretty speech, Captain, and very tolerably express'd; but do you know now, that I look upon the whole business of making love to be mighty foolish, and have no notion of a woman's sense, who is to be flatter'd out of her liberty, by a flimsy compliment to her person.

*Dor.* This liveliness is charming, but you must not however rally me out of my purpose—suffer me, therefore, my dear Miss Montagu, to implore——

Miss *Mon.* No, possitively I must stop you, for there is no bearing the insolence of this humility.

*Dor.* What insolence, my dear Miss Montagu. Is it insolence thus to fall at your feet? Is it insolence——

Miss *Mon.* For heaven's sake, Dormer, don't make a fool of yourself, for I tell you the humblest supplications with which you men can possibly teaze the women, are an unaccountable mixture of pride and absurdity.

*Dor.* There is something so very new in this opinion, madam, that I should be glad you'd let me know how it is to be supported.

Miss *Mon.* O, 'tis very easily supported, if you only suffer me to put the general purport of all love addresses, from the time of the first pair, down to the present hour, into something like plain English.

*Dor.* Pray do.

Miss *Mon.* Why, then, suppose that a tender lover, like you, should offer up his adoration at the altar of some terrestial divinity like myself, let me ask you if this would not be the meaning of his pretty harrangue, however he might study to disguise his design with the plausible language of adulation.

*Dor.* Now for it.

Miss *Mon.* Don't interrupt me. Madam, your beauty is so exquisite, and your merit is so transcendent, that emperors themselves might justly tremble to approach you, and languish in the deepest despair of being allied to so much perfection.

*Dor.* Well said.

Miss *Mon.* Yet, though all hearts are your's, and though you were born to triumph over an admiring world, I desire you will instantly appoint me the master of your fate; my happiness depends upon your being a slave, and I must be eternally wretched, without the power of making you miserable; you must, therefore, promise to know no will but my humour, and no pleasure but my inclination——Your present state of freedom you must exchange for the most mortifying dependence, and throw your whole fortune at my feet, for the honour of managing the domestic concerns of my family. If you——

*Dor.* What the devil is there more of it?

Miss *Mon.* If you behave well, that is, if you put up with every caprice of my temper, and every irregularity of my conduct; if you meanly kiss the hand that strikes at your repose, and treat me with reverence when I offer you the grossest indignities, you shall have an occasional new gown, and sometimes the use of your own chariot——Nay, if you are very good indeed, I may carry my kindness still far-

ther, and use you with nearly as much civility as any of my servants.

*Dor.* What, hav'n't you done yet?

Miss *Mon.* O, I could go on for an hour. But what do you think of this specimen; isn't a true translation of all the love speeches that have been made since the commencement of the world, and are n't you men a set of very modest creatures, to suppose that an address of this elegant nature is calculated to make an instant conquest of our affections?

*Dor.* This spirit is bewitching, and increases my admiration though it treats me with severity.

Miss *Mon.* Well, notwithstanding the frightful idea which I entertain of matrimony, I am, nevertheless, half afraid I shall be at last cheated out of my freedom as well as the rest of my sex—but then I must be perfectly convinc'd of my admirer's sincerity.

*Dor.* A decent hint that, though I wish it had been spar'd. [*Aside.*] And can you, my dear Miss Montagu, possibly doubt the sincerity of my professions, and cruelly turn away those irresistible eyes when I vow an everlasting fidelity? What, still silent, my angel, not a word, not one word to rescue me from distraction—but be it so—if Miss Montagu decrees my fate, I submit without murmuring, for death itself is infinitely preferable to the idea of offending her.—[*Going.*] I think I am pretty safe now. [*Aside.*

Miss *Mon.* Now, who would believe that this fellow could lie with so very grave a countenance. [*Aside.*] Why, you are in a violent hurry, Captain Dormer.

*Dor.* O, zounds, she calls me back does she? [*Aside.*] What, my dear Miss Montagu, do you relent, do you feel the least compassion for the distresses of a heart that adores you?

Miss *Mon.* Sit down, captain. Sit down here—I am a

strange, foolish creature, and cannot disguise my sentiments. But if I thought myself the only object——

*Dor.* By all my hopes——

Miss *Mon.* Well, don't swear—I must believe you. And yet I am strangely apprehensive, that in the extensive circle of your acquaintance you must have form'd some attachments. The world has been talking, and 'tis no secret that Miss Willoughby has accomplishments.

Miss WILLOUGHBY *enters unobserved by* Dormer, *and sits down.*

*Dor.* Yes, madam, Miss Willoughby has accomplishments, but they are very trifling.

Miss *Mon.* Then you never entertained any tenderness for her, I suppose.

*Dor.* For Miss Willoughby, madam. O, my dear Miss Montagu, you don't think me altogether destitute of understanding?

Miss *Mon.* Why, you just now own'd that she had accomplishments.

*Dor.* Yes, I said that she had trifling ones.

Miss *Mon.* And no more?

*Dor.* The baby's face is regular enough, and might serve very well for the window of a toy-shop.

Miss *Mon.* Then I find there is nothing to be apprehended on her account.

*Dor.* On her account, my angel, you sha'n't lessen the merit of your own attractions so much, as to admit the possibility of supposing it.

Miss *Will.* [*Giving him a pull by the sleeve.*] I am very much obliged to you, sir.

Miss *Mon.* [*Ludicrously.*] 'Not a word, not one word to rescue me from distraction——'

Miss *Will.* 'The baby's face is regular enough, and might serve very well for the window of a toy-shop.'

Miss *Mon.* 'But be it so—if Miss Montagu decrees my fate, I submit without murmuring.'

Miss *Will.* I don't think the gentleman altogether destitute of understanding.

Miss *Mon.* 'For death itself is infinitely more preferable to the idea of offending her'——There, Miss Willoughby, is a man of honour for you.

Miss *Will.* And are these the men who value themselves so much upon their veracity?

Miss *Mon.* O, my dear, they have veracity to a very prudent degree, for they never tell a falsehood to any body who is capable of calling them to an account. But come, Miss Willoughby, let us leave the gentleman to himself; he has a very pretty subject for a reverie, and it would be cruel to disturb him in his agreeable reflections. Sir, your most obedient.——Give it him home, my dear girl; have no mercy on him. [*Aside to Miss* Willoughby.

Miss *Will.* Sir, your most respectful.

Miss *Mon.* That's right.——Sir, your most oblig'd.

Miss *Will.* Your most faithful.

Miss *Mon.* Bravo!—And most devoted humble servant.

[*Exeunt laughing.*

*Dor.* [*After a long pause of confusion.*] So, I have had a hopeful time on't; my evil genius has been a long arrear in my debt, and now pays me off with a witness. What a sneaking, what a pitiful puppy do I appear, thus detected, thus laughed at. But I deserve it all. I would not see the infamy of practising deceit upon a woman—I must even think myself called upon to betray, because the object was a woman; and laugh at the anguish I gave a worthy heart, because it was lodged in a female breast.——Not-

withstanding all my mortification, however, I am overjoyed at finding Miss Willoughby safe——I may now, perhaps, prevent the matter from reaching my father's ears—not that I fear he will discard—but what is infinitely worse, if he knows it, will eternally despise me.—How merry the girls were with me—Sir, your most respectful—Sir, your most obliged—Sir, your most faithful———

*Enter* Sir JOHN DORMER.

Sir *John.* Sir, your most devoted humble servant——

*Dor.* [*Aside.*] O! now I am completely done for——

Sir *John.* Well, sir, what can be urged for you now?—Is this the reformation I was to expect—and is this the regard which you entertain for the credit of your family?

*Dor.* If you 'll give me leave to clear this matter up, sir—

Sir *John.* 'T is already cleared up—Mr. Willoughby—Miss Montagu have cleared it up.——And now, suppose Mr. Willoughby listening only to the dictates of his rage, and not to the pleadings of his friendship for me, had demanded reparation for his wrongs—how, after robbing him of his daughter, could you come prepared against his life?—And how, after destroying a young lady's reputation, could you attempt to imbrue your hands in the blood of her father?——But, sir, you are a man of spirit, you are a man of honour; and that spirit, and that honour are to be sufficient pleas for every violence offered to justice, and every outrage committed upon humanity. You have a title to be guilty, because you have the character of being brave, and you may perpetrate the blackest crime with impunity, because you have the diabolical resolution to defend it.

*Dor.* There is so much propriety in this reproach, sir—that I feel myself unable to answer it.

Sir *John.* That sword I gave you, sir, to be exerted in

the cause of honour, not to be drawn in the support of infamy—I gave it to be used in the defence of your country, not to be exercised in the violation of her laws. But why do I talk of honour to him who looks with admiration upon shame, and thinks himself accomplished in proportion as he becomes profligate?—Why do I reason with a man who glories in the prostitution of his understanding, and imagines he exalts his character, as he destroys the peace of society? —Perhaps, in his ideas of bravery, he may be obliged even to raise his arm against my bosom, and perhaps he may punish a reproachful mention of his vices, though it comes from the lips of his father.

*Dor.* Sir, I have been culpable, extremely culpable—but my present intention is to remove Mr. Willoughby's distress—not to defend the injury I offered him; and I can with truth affirm, that the principal part of my misconduct in this affair, originally proceeded from the great veneration which I entertained for that very father who now thinks me so profligate and unnatural.

Sir *John.* Mighty well!

*Dor.* I loved Miss Willoughby, sir, tenderly loved her, before you entered into an engagement about Miss Montagu. But, fearful of disobliging you, I kept the circumstance of my passion a secret, as I did not suppose you would countenance a union, where there was so material a disparity of situations.

Sir *John.* And pray, sir, how dare you suppose that I should be more offended at the performance of a good action, than at the commission of a dishonourable one?—How dare you imagine I should be displeased at your marriage with Miss Willoughby, and that I should not be infinitely more displeased at this scandalous seduction?—But it was your regard for me which led you to betray the confidence

of your friend, as well as to attempt the innocence of his daughter—Yes, sir, your regard for me is extremely evident —You knew how much my happiness depended upon your reputable rise in the world, and how warmly I expected you would be a credit to your country, as well as an ornament to your family——Your natural advantages were great, and your education has been liberal; yet, instead of the flattering prospects with which my imagination was once delighted, I have now nothing before me but a gloomy scene of disappointment and regret.—Instead of hearing my son's name with joy, and exulting in the growing dignity of his character, I am hourly mortified with some fresh accounts of his licentiousness, and hourly trembling, lest the hand of well-grounded resentment, or the sword of public justice, should cut him off in the perpetration of his crimes—Instead of finding him the support of my age, he incessantly saps the foundation of my life, and instead of kindly nourishing the lamp of my existence with his virtues, he sinks me down into the grave, an equal victim of sorrow and disgrace.

*Dor.* [*Falling at his father's feet.*] No more, sir, I beseech you no more—nor suppose me such a monster. My life, hitherto, has been a scene of folly and dissipation; and I reflect, with the deepest concern, upon the anxiety which the best of fathers has suffered on my account; but if he can be prevail'd upon to forgive the past, the future, I will boldly say, shall merit his approbation—for I am now satisfied that nothing can be consistent with the principles of honour, which is any way repugnant to the laws of morality.

Sir *John.* Rise, and be my son again; there is a candour, there is a generosity in this acknowledgement which engages my confidence—and I still flatter myself with a belief that you will answer my warmest expectations.

*Dor.* You are too good, sir. But the freedom with which

I shall communicate the most unfavourable circumstances of this affair, as well as my readiness to fulfil all your commands, shall, in some measure, prove the certainty of my reformation.

Sir *John*. Why, Jack, this is speaking like my son; and to let you see that your inclination is the only object of my wishes, Miss Willoughby's hand now waits to crown your return to virtue.

*Dor*. Miss Willoughby's, sir!

Sir *John*. Yes; Miss Montagu, just as I entered, acquainted me with the whimsical distress of your courtship scene, in terms equally consistent with her usual good-nature and vivacity, and on account of your attachment to Miss Willoughby, as well as her own fixed disinclination to be yours, requested I would not think any longer of the treaty between our families. Finding her determined in the solicitation, I would by no means force her wishes—and am now rejoiced at so lucky an opportunity of rewarding, as you yourself could desire, the merit of your present character.

*Dor*. There is no doing justice to the generosity of your sentiments, sir———

Sir *John*. Poh, poh, man; the parent that makes his children happiest always gives them the best fortunes.—We'll now join the company cheerfully. But remember for the future, my dear boy, what every son should constantly have in view, that more than your own happiness and your own honour are trusted to your care, and that you cannot experience a misfortune, nor suffer a disgrace, without sensibly wounding the bosom of your father. [*Exeunt*.

## *SCENE II.*

*Another Room at Sir* John Dormer's. *Enter* Sir GEORGE.

Sir *Geo.* So then, it seems, I am not quite detestable after all—It seems there are some women, though I have been rejected, who can still think me amiable—and declare, if ever they change their situation, I must positively be the man. Villars had the secret from Miss Dormer, and Miss Dormer had the acknowledgment of Miss Montagu's regard for me, from Miss Montagu herself; her refusal of Dormer moreover corroborates the intelligence, even if there was any thing very improbable in my having engaged a lady's affection. Upon my soul I don't see but Harriot is to the full as handsome as Caroline; and then her understanding—yes, I think 't is pretty evident that she has the advantage in understanding——Ay, but can I so readily forget Caroline? Can I so quickly remove my addresses, and offer up that heart at the shrine of the one which has been so recently rejected at the altar of the other?—Why, to be sure, there will be nothing extremely gallant in such an affair. But, at the same time there will be nothing extremely preposterous. It does n't follow, because I have been repuls'd by one woman, that I should forswear the whole sex; and, in a fit of amorous lunacy, like the knight errants of old, nobly dedicate my life to despair, because I unfortunately lost the original object of my affections. Besides, at the present period, changing hands is all the fashion; and while it is so meritorious in men of quality to part with their wives, it cannot surely be very criminal to part with our mistresses—Here, by all that 's opportune, she comes; what a bewitching girl! ——O! 't would be barbarous to let her pine. I 'll give her encouragement at once, and put an end to her anxiety.

*Enter* Miss MONTAGU.

Miss *Mon.* O! there's no bearing their loves, and their joys—their tears, and their congratulations——Sir John has joined the hands of another couple—and Caroline has now Miss Willoughby to keep her in countenance. But pray, Sir George, was n't poor Villars overjoy'd when you told him of Sir John's design of receiving him as a son-in-law?

Sir *Geo.* He was, both with gratitude and astonishment. However, I carried him immediately to Sir John—here Miss Dormer was sent for, and, without the least hint of her private sentiments, Sir John, who had properly sounded the young fellow's inclination, introduced him as a man whom he found worthy to be his son-in-law, and her husband.

Miss *Mon.* I pitied her situation most heartily.

Sir *Geo.* I pity the situation of every lady in love, madam.

Miss *Mon.* I am sure Miss Dormer thinks herself much indebted to your generosity.

Sir *Geo.* Perhaps, madam, I may yet have obligations to the prepossession of Miss Dormer.

Miss *Mon.* Prepossessions are strong things, Sir George.

Sir *Geo.* And, in a lady's bosom, madam, very troublesome.

Miss *Mon.* Not where the object is attainable.

Sir *Geo.* True, madam—and he must be a barbarian, who, conscious of a lady's tenderness, possesses the ability, without the inclination to return it——I think that hint will give her some consolation. [*Aside.*

Miss *Mon.* The men, I believe, Sir George, have but few opportunities of exercising such a barbarity—Indications of tenderness seldom first proceed from the ladies.

Sir *Geo.* I do n't know that, madam; but was I happy enough to be the object of a lady's esteem, I would sacrifice

much to remove her anxiety.——This will make her speak, or the devil's in't. [*Aside.*

Miss *Mon.* Kind creature! and so you'd condescend to take pity on her.

Sir *Geo.* I would do every thing to make her happy, madam.——Why, what the plague must she be in love, and is the courtship to come entirely from my side? [*Aside.*

Miss *Mon.* Well! you are a whimsical creature, and so I'll leave you——

Sir *Geo.* Stay, Miss Montagu———

Miss *Mon.* For what?

Sir *Geo.* I will be generous, and spare her blushes. [*Aside.*] I have something very serious to say to you.

Miss *Mon.* Serious, indeed, if one may judge by your gravity.

Sir *Geo.* Miss Montagu, I am inexpressibly concerned—I say, inexpressibly concerned, to see you of late so melancholy.

Miss *Mon.* To see me of late so melancholy! Why, Sir George, I never had better spirits.

Sir *Geo.* No!

Miss *Mon.* No——really.

Sir *Geo.* I could not imagine it.

Miss *Mon.* And why so, pray?

Sir *Geo.* Why so, madam?—Nay, I have no particular reason——But Miss Montagu, I should be sorry to see you labour under the smallest uneasiness——I have the highest opinion of your merit, madam—and———

Miss *Mon.* Surely Caroline has not—[*Aside.*] I shall be always proud of possessing a place in the good opinion of Sir George Hastings.

Sir *Geo.* You do possess the principal place in my opinion, madam—and——

## *SCENE III.*

*The back Scene is thrown open, and discovers* Sir JOHN, Captain *and* Miss DORMER, VILLARS, Mr. Mrs. *and* Miss WILLOUGHBY.

Sir *Geo.* Zounds, this interruption is abominable.

*Dor.* Ay, this is right; now the rooms are thrown together, we shall have space enough for a country dance in the evening.——Villars, we now are brothers.

*Vil.* To my unspeakable transport.

Sir *John.* [*To* Willoughby, *who seems in private conversation with him.*] Nay, no acknowledgment, my dear Mr. Willoughby, I am acting no more than an interested part, and consulting my own wishes in the wishes of my children.

*Will.* [*To his Wife.*] Does n't every thing happen for the best, now? And is n't this excellent young man, to whom I probably owe my child, another proof—that if we are desirous of happiness, we must labour to deserve it.

Mrs. *Will.* [*Aside.*] My Scotch scheme has help'd the business greatly, for all that.

Sir *John.* We 'll have a public wedding, the friends of all our families shall be invited—and, Mr. Villars, let not any humility in the situation of yours prevent you from calling the worthy to be witnesses of the justice which fortune renders to your merit.

*Vil.* Sir, your goodness is unbounded; but justice obliges me to tell you, that the man thus honour'd with your esteem, is even more humble than you think him; that he has no family, no relations, and, out of this company, no friends.

*Will.* How 's this?

Sir *John.* Pray, was n't Mr. Villars, the clergyman in my neighbourhood, your uncle?

*Vil.* He was the best of men; and more than a father to me in every thing but the actual relation.

*Will.* [*Impatiently.* Stand out of the way.

Mrs. *Will.* My dear, I desire you won't forget the rules of propriety.

*Will.* You said, sir, you were ignorant of your family.

*Vil.* I did, sir.

*Will.* Some unhappy father, like me, now bleeds for the loss of a son.——Pray go on.

Mrs. *Will.* My dear———

*Vil.* At an early stage of infancy, some wandering miscreants stole me from my friends, and carried me into a distant part of the country, where a woman, who call'd herself my mother, being committed to prison for a theft, fell ill of a fever, that put a period to her life—with her dying breath she related this circumstance, and would have told more, but the last agonies taking away her utterance, prevented the possibility of any farther declaration.

Sir *John.* How unfortunate!

Miss *Dor.* How extremely unfortunate!

*Vil.* It would have been still more unfortunate, had n't the good Mr. Villars, who kept a little academy in the place, attended the poor wretch with medicines, and looked with an eye of compassion on my helpless situation. Mr. Villars was the universal friend of mankind, the rich never mention'd him without reverence, and the poor never beheld him without joy—but his income was too narrow for the extent of his benevolence, and he was involv'd in continual distresses, from the uncommon excellence of his heart.

Sir *Geo.* Zounds, no person doubts his being a good man.

*Vil.* Mr. Villars, without hesitating, ordered me to be taken care of, and, as soon as I was capable of instruction, receiv'd me into his house, where I was educated in common with the rest of his pupils, and at last grew sufficiently qua-

lified to be his assistant; but his necessities increasing with the exercise of his virtues, notwithstanding my utmost assiduity, he was oblig'd to sell his academy, and I had at last the mortification of closing his eyes in the very prison, from which I was originally rescu'd by the greatness of his humanity.

Miss *Dor.* And was it just at this time that Sir John bought the seat in your neighbourhood?

*Vil.* It was, madam, and it was at this time also, that hearing Sir John had an occasion for an assistant in some literary employments, I procur'd the recommendation to him which has given me the honour of being known in this family. The only trace of what I ever was is this picture: which was by some means in my possession when I was stolen, as the woman who stole me declar'd in the course of her imperfect narration; fearing to dispose of it, she kept it to the hour of her death, and then delivered it up as a possible means of finding out my family.

Sir *John.* Let me see this picture.

*Will.* No, let me see it for the love of heaven—O, Sir John, Sir John, this was Lady Dormer's picture, she made a present of it to my first wife, and here on the setting are the initials of her name.

Sir *John.* I remember it perfectly, I myself ordered the letters to be engrav'd.

*Vil.* I can scarce speak.

*Will.* While I have power to ask, tell me, sir, what is your age.———

*Vil.* Twenty-two.

*Will.* Receive my thanks, receive my thanks, kind Heaven!—O, my boy, my boy! Providence still orders all things for the best, and I am in reality your father.

*Vil.* O, sir! bless your son, and assure him he has a father.

Miss *Will.* [*Embracing him.*] My brother my deliverer too!—this is happiness, indeed.

Mrs. *Will.* Let me embrace you too. Your sister will tell you what a mother-in-law I am, and how much she is indebted to my lessons of propriety.——Well! I begin myself to think every thing happens for the best, after the unexpected good fortune of this morning.

*Dor.* Not to Sir George, I am sure—for he loses a good estate by this unexpected discovery.

[*Here Miss* Montagu, *Miss* Dormer, *Sir* John, *and* Dormer *seem congratulating* Villars—*so does Sir* George.]

Sir *Geo.* What, you begin to crow again, do you?—— But, let me tell you, I think every accident happens for the best, which enables me to do an act of justice, and advance the welfare of the deserving.

Miss *Mon.* Generously considered indeed, Sir George—few people, I believe, would give up a fortune so easily.

Sir *Geo.* Why, my friend Jack there, if he lost both an estate and a mistress in a couple of hours, would hardly set so good a face upon matters, notwithstanding he is much my superior in serenity of countenance.

Sir *John.* And perhaps, Sir George, even you may be a considerable gainer in the end, if we can but contrive to make an actual comedy of to-day's adventures, by your marriage with a certain lady in this company.

[*Looking at Miss* Montagu.

Sir *Geo.* And possibly that might be yet effected, through your interposition, Sir John, with Miss Montagu.

Miss *Mon.* What! is your denoument to be produced at my expence; upon my word, I should be much oblig'd to Sir John's interposition for such a purpose!

Sir *Geo.* I should at least, madam, and though I come rather with an ill grace after so recent a rejection.

*Dor.* Your affection is not unadulterated now, Sir George.

Sir *Geo.* Why, no—but I hav'n't yet told Miss Montagu, 'that death itself is infinitely preferable to the idea of offending her'—[*Ludicrously.*]—though I would readily risk my life to purchase her favourable opinion. [*Turning to her.*

Miss *Mon.* Well, do n't talk to me on this subject now, Sir George. You have, to be sure, merited much, and you are in every respect so greatly the opposite of my confident swain there, who thought I must fly into his arms the moment he condescended to receive me; that, however, I won't hear a syllable from you now—if you can make a tolerable bow to me, do, but do n't let me hear a syllable of nonsense, I beg of you.

Sir *Geo.* This goodness———

*Dor.* Did n't the lady say she wou'd n't hear a syllable of nonsense.

Sir *Geo.* And so you begin to talk to her, do you?

Mrs. *Will.* Mighty fine! is it nonsense to make a grateful acknowledgement for the kindness of a lady. What will the men come to at last?

Sir *Geo.* So he thinks, madam. Though, Villars, [*Aside to* Villars.] 'tis a little hard, because Miss Montagu chooses to consult her own happiness, that I am to acknowledge the receipt of an obligation.

Sir *John.* My dear Sir George, Miss Montagu has too much discernment not to see the value of so deserving a lover—address her, therefore, certain of success, and look securely for happiness according to Mr. Willoughby's principle, because you richly merit it.

*Will.* Right, Sir John—Providence looks down delighted on the actions of the worthy, and, however it may command adversity to frown on the beginning of their days, they will acknowledge with me, that all its dispensations are full of benignity in the end. [*Exeunt omnes.*

# EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. BARRY.

*MODISH divines, at court and in the city,*
*Are in their pulpit humourous, gay, and witty——*
*They 've now chang'd hands, the stage and pulpit teaching,*
*Sermons are plays, and plays are merely preaching——*
A Word to the Wise, *a pretty pert adviser!——*
*As if 't were possible to make you wiser:*
*Yet as each here may think the poet labours*
*Not to teach him, but to instruct his neighbours;*
*As the bright tenants of that splendid row*
*Sneer on the pit, for beings much below;*
*And these in turn, as things in order move,*
*Toss up the sneer to those who mount above:*
*The gods look down, and let* their *pity fall*
*On front, side, green, stage-boxes, pit, and all.*
*Let me, before your carriages appear,*
*Breathe one short word, ye wise ones, in your ear.*
*You, stop your chairs,* [to the side boxes] *you hacks,* [to the pit] *won't run away:*
*And ladies,* [to the gallery] *put not on your pattens pray:*
*And first, ye soft, ye sweet romantic maids,*
*Who die for purling streams, and sylvan shades,*
*And think for better and for worse, to take*
*The best of husbands in a darling rake;*
*Who brings a shatter'd fortune to the fair,*
*With mind and body wanting vast repair;*
*Shall I for once your tender thoughts reveal?*
*'T is fine to hear him swear, to see him kneel;*

*His tongue with worn-out extacies will run,*
*'Till he has triumph'd, 'till the wife's undone;*
*And then that tender strain, so love-creating,*
*Turn to, 'Death, madam, hold your cursed prating—*
*'You quite distract me—pr'ythee farther stand——*
*'I won't be teaz'd—Zounds, take away your hand—'*
*This is a sad change, ladies, but 't is common,*
*Man will be man, and woman will be woman;*
*For Villars is a phœnix, where's his brother?*
*'T will take a hundred years to find another.*
*Yet you, ye sires, whom time should render wise,*
*You act as if each moment it could rise;*
*Forgetting all what you yourselves have been,*
*You trust your girls with Dormers at fifteen;*
*Throw the poor lambkins in the tyger's way,*
*Then stare to find a rake—a beast of prey.*
*Learn prudence here—and, O! you precious blades,*
*Whether cockaded, or without cockades;*
*Whether haranguing for the public good,*
*You shake St. Stephen's—or the Robinhood——*
*Who ring our charms for ever in our ears,*
*Yet inly triumph in a virgin's tears;*
*Be now convinc'd—the libertine disclaim,*
*And live to honour, if not dead to shame.*
*What is the plaudit of a fool when mellow,*
*Roaring in raptures,* a damn'd honest fellow?
*Will that repay you for the bosom stings?*
Damn'd honest fellows, *oft are worthless things——*
*But I'll stop here, I will not sermonize——*
*A foolish woman can't instruct the wise.*

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THE END.